

# THE NATION

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### EVENTS OF THE WEEK

THE principle of eight o'clock closing has been upheld by the Shop Hours Committee, who recommend in effect that the present shop closing regulations should be made permanent, subject to various minor modifications designed to remove glaring anomalies and to a restricted application of the principle of local option. A Report of this tenour was not likely to receive a favourable Press, and it has not received one. Newspapers have a natural and healthy bias against restrictions in general. It is also their more or less deliberate aim to express, whenever possible, the direct, immediate reactions of the man in the street. There is no doubt that they are expressing these reactions quite accurately in demanding a clean sweep of these war-time, shop-hour restrictions from which almost everyone has suffered some degree of petty inconvenience. The newspaper attitude has, however, had one serious drawback. The public has been given

a highly distorted notion of the reasons why the restrictions have been retained. It might suppose, from what it has read hitherto, that they are essentially purposeless and gratuitous, that the traders object to them as much as anyone else, and that their continuance is due to an objectionable craving of officialdom to harry people and regulate their lives. The present Report should serve to dispel this illusion. The force which has given such longevity to D.O.R.A. is nothing less than the demand of an overwhelming majority of the shopkeepers and their assistants, who regard these restrictions, much as the miners regarded the legal enforcement of a maximum Seven-Hour Day, as a Charter of leisure.

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If only the assistants had to be considered, the case might be met by limiting their hours of work directly, without insisting on the closing of the shops. Two members of the Committee, Mr. Hore Belisha and Mrs. Hilton Philipson, append reservations, expressing their preference for this procedure; and Mr. Hore Belisha makes the interesting point that the present system of regulating the hours of shop assistants by the device of early closing leaves unprotected workers in hotels, restaurants, &c., whom it is no less desirable to protect. The majority of the Committee, however, reject this alternative, partly because enforcement would be more difficult, and partly for reasons concerned with the shopkeepers' point of view. And we are bound to say that the shopkeepers' point of view seems to us as worthy of consideration as that of the shop assistant. Their attitude makes it clear that, in their judgment, the business which they lose by early closing is of negligible importance compared with the cost in money and trouble and health of keeping open. It follows, if this is true, that to return to unregulated hours would mean, from the national standpoint, a definite economic waste, which, we may suspect, outweighs the petty inconveniences to which the regulations subject the public. On the point of principle, we can see no valid distinction between interfering with the workers' technical freedom of contract, at their own collective desire and in their own collective interest, and interfering, under the same conditions, with the retailers' technical freedom of trade. The former are assuredly not more helpless against their employers than are the latter against the force of competition.

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There remains, of course, the practical consideration that early closing regulations touch the public more directly and are therefore more provocative of irritation and of a sense that the rights of the individual citizen are being wantonly curtailed. This is not a consideration which can be brushed lightly on one side. There is no other test of liberty than that people should not genuinely feel themselves to be unfree;

neither statesmen, trade unions, nor traders' associations can afford to disregard public psychology on such matters. This objection applies, however, more to the anomalies of the early closing regulations than to their main features. It is such facts as that you are allowed to buy chocolates and ice-cream in a theatre during one interval and not during another, that you can buy one kind of fruit and not another, that cause exasperation, rather than the fact that the majority of shops are not open at all after eight o'clock at night. It is very important to remove these sources of exasperation by removing the anomalies, or, where only a choice of anomalies is possible, by choosing that which does less violence to the individual citizen's sense of freedom. The Shop Hours Committee have attempted to discharge this task. How far have they succeeded? They propose to allow us to buy confectionery and tobacco at theatres throughout the continuance of the performance. This is clearly right. To oppose it on the grounds of prejudice to the confectioners and tobacconists is the smallest-minded and shortest-sighted pedantry. More doubtful, perhaps, is the proposal to allow the sale of tobacco in licensed premises after eight o'clock. It is anomalous that a publican should be allowed to sell you whisky when he is not allowed to sell you tobacco. But is it less anomalous that you should be able to buy tobacco from a publican and not from a tobacconist? The case is not so clear; but on the principle of choosing that anomaly which is less irksome to the private citizen, we should give our vote for the Committee's recommendation.

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We cannot stop to discuss the other changes proposed by the Committee; the proposal, for example, to relax hours in seaside places during a holiday season, if the local authority so desires. For the most part, we think them sensible; and our general conclusion is that the Committee have done their thankless task well. Their Report is by no means the featureless compromise which it is widely represented to be. On the contrary, their proposals, taken as a whole, seem admirably calculated to reconcile two desirable objectives: (1) to retain for retail traders and their employees the protection which early closing gives against an injurious and almost purposeless competition in business hours; (2) to remove the irritating features of the present arrangements which cause to-day widespread and legitimate resentment. In other words, there are in this Report the makings of a reasonable settlement of a very difficult controversy; and we hope that reasonable opinion will rally round it.

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The EVENING STANDARD of Wednesday calls attention to some important questions raised by the serious floods which have followed the snow and the rains of recent weeks. Flooding on a less serious scale is a normal feature of this period of the year; and it follows as a corollary from the laws of averages and of the weather, that there must occasionally come years when the flooding will be upon an abnormal scale. On the present occasion, indeed, the damage would have been much more serious than it has been, but for the six-days' frost which gave time for a large volume of flood-water to get away to the sea before the snows began to melt. In face of the virtual certainty of the periodical recurrence of such troubles, we display, both individually and collectively, a singular passivity and heedlessness. Neither our individual citizens in building their bungalows, nor it seems our County Councils in placing their housing estates, give a thought to the question of whether flooding is a danger. Nor is that all. One cannot avoid tracing a connection between the increas-

ing tendency to floods and the decadence which has overtaken our land drainage system, to which the recent Royal Commission on Land Drainage drew attention. The problem of land drainage, which is at root a question of who is to bear the cost, is not one which we can afford to neglect much longer.

\* \* \*

The interchanges between France and the United States over the project of a treaty for the "outlawry of war," to replace the Root Treaty which expires next month, reveal divergences of conception which are amusingly characteristic. In French eyes, the whole appeal of the project lay in the property of exclusiveness which they fondly imagined was to attach to it. It was to mark the special cordiality of relations between the two sister Republics. It was to make it rather more probable that if France again were to become embroiled in war the United States would come to her assistance. Accordingly, now that the State Department has formally proposed that all the principal Powers should be invited to join in the Treaty, French opinion is utterly disconcerted. It is not the French idea at all that the United States should bind herself not to make war on Germany. But it is equally not the American idea to conclude a sort of special Pact with France. The American idea is to meet somehow the aspirations for which the League of Nations stands without joining that institution. But it is difficult to take the American proposal very seriously. The present Administration is approaching its end, and the Senate would not entertain any new commitments. The fact that the United States is actually engaged at the moment in warlike operations in Nicaragua does not serve to add reality to the present proposal.

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The German Government is showing perseverance and considerable wisdom in overcoming the difficulties with the Reichswehr. In a revised set of recruiting regulations recently issued, the Government has carefully avoided coming into conflict with the semi-military societies which were so prominent in the treason trials of 1925 and 1926. Recruiting officers may enlist the services of non-political organizations. They are apparently left free to decide whether the local branch of the "Steel Helmets" or "Vikings" is political or not. On the other hand, no person can be enrolled unless he produces a police certificate that he has never been engaged in anti-constitutional activities. The German police are very well informed about the staffs and personnel of anti-constitutional societies, and are not likely to be duped, or to give certificates carelessly. If General Heye has conceived these regulations, he is to be congratulated on having met the Republican Government's legitimate wishes, without causing a fresh controversy.

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According to the terms of the Pact of Rome, the treaty of friendship between Italy and Yugoslavia will expire in January, 1929, unless it is renewed on the 27th of the present month. In view of the recent friction between the two countries, its renewal is improbable; on the other hand, its denunciation might have dangerous consequences. It is now understood that the date for renewal or denunciation of the treaty will be deferred for six months, giving both countries time to consider their position. It will give time also, in view of the new and better turn given to Franco-Italian relations, for France to use her influence in favour of renewal of the Pact, or its replacement by some similar agreement. Some features of the Pact may not be free from objection; but in view of the present state of Adriatic politics, and the extreme

jumpiness of the Balkan populations, almost any agreement is better than none.

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The discussions between the Vatican and the Italian Government are still wrapped in mystery; but their progress continues to be buoyed and beacons by authoritative articles from highly placed persons on both sides. The latest contribution comes from the side of the Vatican. Dom Pietro Stoppani, writing, as is thought, on behalf of Monsignor Bonomelli, the Bishop of Cremona, has outlined a solution by which the Holy See should be given the Apostolic Palaces outright (at present it only possesses the use of them), after which the Italian Government would recognize a diplomatic sovereignty in the Pope, similar to that possessed by the League of Nations at Geneva. This solution would undoubtedly satisfy all but the most reactionary members of the College of Cardinals; but we have yet to learn the attitude of the Italian Government.

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The Persian Government has lodged a letter with the League of Nations, laying claim to sovereignty over the Bahrain Islands, and protesting against the clauses in the Treaty of Jeddah which constitute the local sheikh as a sovereign under special British protection. The League will have to investigate a great deal of intricate history if it decides to look into the protest. The islands lie on the Arabian side of the Persian Gulf, and from time immemorial they have been governed by local sheikhs; but they have changed hands so often, and the local sheikhs have passed under the superior sovereignty of other empires so frequently, that it will be extremely difficult to decide whether the Persian claim has any real foundation. Geographically, the islands are right outside the Persian orbit, and any rights acquired by conquest appear to have lapsed by reason of the semi-independent position that the ruling family have enjoyed for many years. Incidentally, the present ruling family have fairly earned British support by their co-operation with the British and Indian Governments in the suppression of the slave trade.

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There is no mistaking the fact that the movement in India to boycott the Simon Commission is widespread. Indeed, there is no representative political body in the country that has come out for co-operation with the Commission, although a number of the organizations of minority communities have done so, more or less reservedly. The strongest of these is the moderate wing of the Indian Moslem League, which at the Lahore Conference separated itself decisively from the section that, led by Mr. M. A. Jinnah of Bombay, has thrown in its lot with the Swarajist National Congress and the policy of boycott. It is worth noting that the *TIMES OF INDIA*, impressed by the extent and passion of the hostility to the Commission, has been pleading for a revised programme and suggesting that as a preliminary Sir John Simon should go out to India alone. This obviously is not a practicable proposal, arrangements being now completed for the Commission to begin work in Bombay three weeks hence. The outstanding fact of a situation that must, from any point of view, be regarded as distressing is the unanimity of the political leaders in denouncing the Commission and the method associated with it as an affront to India. The threatened boycott is aggressive on the Swarajist side, but is explained on the Liberal side as merely negative. In reply to the denunciation of the Labour Party with which the Indian Press is ringing, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald has issued a brief appeal, which restates effec-

tively the argument of his speech in the House: that the combination of a Parliamentary Commission and a Committee of the Indian Legislature affords a genuine opportunity for equal co-operation in the working of an Indian Constitution.

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A somewhat startling anomaly was swept away on January 1st, when an Ordinance came into force, abolishing the legal status of slavery in the Sierra Leone Protectorate. It was a genuine shock to most people to learn, last year, that it was still legal, in that Protectorate, for a master to use force for the purpose of recapturing a runaway slave; and it was a strange irony that connected this survival with a Colony founded as a refuge for liberated slaves. Slavery, of course, has never existed in the Colony. The Protectorate is a much more recent institution, having been established in 1896. Steps were taken at once to put an end to the slave trade; but it was not considered possible to abolish at one stroke the mild form of domestic slavery which existed in the Protectorate. Measures for its gradual suppression had, however, been passed, and the judicial decision which led to so much comment last year, appears to have been due merely to the defective drafting of an Ordinance of 1926. The Sierra Leone Legislature took immediate steps to remedy that defect, and the anomaly is now removed. It is not anticipated that the change will have any disturbing effect. Slaves with good masters will remain as paid employees. Steps are being taken to find land for those who desire to leave.

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The Chinese Maritime Customs revenue for 1927 shows a total of about £9,677,000, as compared with £12,165,000 in the previous year. The Manchurian ports, Amoy, and Swatow, all show an increase, the bulk of the decrease being at Shanghai, Hankow, and Canton. The decrease indicates a reduction of about £24,000,000 in the total volume of trade—a serious figure, but much smaller than might have been expected from the chaotic conditions existing during the year. It is worth noting that the export figures show hardly any decline, proving that there has been no great difficulty in dispatching goods from the interior to the coast. The decline in imports is attributed less to the boycotts than to the loss of confidence among the native dealers. On the whole, the most striking feature of the figures is the evidence afforded of the remarkable ability of the Chinese trading community to carry on, through all the disorders of the past few years.

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The report of the Education Officer of the London County Council for 1926 contains an interesting contrast between past and present in what used to be regarded as the poorest school in London. Truancy has disappeared, the relations between parents and teachers are friendly, a school tradition is being built up. Best of all, the children themselves are no longer ill-clad, ill-shod, and half-starved. Impatience with the slow progress of social amelioration is natural and proper; but to those who are in close contact with the schools in poor neighbourhoods, the improvement made during the last thirty years gives good hopes for the future. One great problem still to be solved is the lack of playing fields; but the report gives an encouraging account of the help received from amateur sports clubs, which, in 1926, provided facilities for 124 school departments. Another item of interest is the success of the special schools, first started in 1916, with a special curriculum for boys in neighbourhoods where unskilled work predominates.



## THE MASTER COTTON SPINNERS GO SILLY

THE controlling spirits of the Federation of Master Cotton Spinners' Associations are apparently envious of the notoriety which the Mining Association has won during the past two years. They have put forward proposals for lower wages, and—in face of a condition such that the trade is working at less than two-thirds of full capacity, although selling at a heavy loss—for longer hours. These proposals, it is true, are still at a very early stage of the lengthy process which is customary in the cotton trade. So far, the Federation has merely submitted them, as a suggested basis of joint action, to the manufacturers' organization; and the latter body, according to the *MANCHESTER GUARDIAN*, has received them most unfavourably. It is possible, therefore, that the proposals will never reach the stage of being presented to the operatives as a serious demand. But the Spinners' Federation, apart from its new disposition to emulate the coal-owners, has an old-established reputation of its own as an exceedingly stubborn body. We shall do well, therefore, to take these almost incredible proposals seriously.

We are told that partial disclosure has done an injustice to the Federation's policy. Their proposals, it seems, are not confined to wages and hours, but are contained in a Report which is "also concerned with" (we quote from the account in the *MANCHESTER GUARDIAN COMMERCIAL*) "mill finance, the burden of social services, national taxation and local rates, the general reduction of production costs throughout the industry, and the improvement of merchanting." We are anxious to be impressed, but we confess that we are not. That an employers' organization which is setting out to attack hours and wages should complain also (as the coal-owners did) of the social services, and of the burden of rates and taxes, is poor evidence of a constructive frame of mind. The references to mill finance and merchanting would be more encouraging if there were any reason to believe that they stood for serious, concrete plans. But it is plain from the accounts which have appeared that they are merely flourishes. The wages and hours proposals, on the other hand, are ominously precise: 25 per cent. off the standard lists, equivalent to 12½ per cent. off present wage-rates, and a 52½-hour week, to be effected by a revised time-schedule, which is set out in detail and includes a return to a spell of work before breakfast.

That the leaders of the Federation should even toy with such a programme is an astounding self-exposure. The ineptitude of the course which they have chosen is the more singular just because there is so close, fresh, and notorious a parallel to the programme itself. The demonstration by events of the folly of the coal-owners' policy has been the outstanding feature of our industrial history during 1927. It is after this dramatic object-lesson that the Federation proposes that the cotton trade should do likewise.

Indeed, the parallel is hardly fair to the coal-owners. They had admittedly an overwhelming case for seeking some reduction in labour costs. For the unsubsidized prices of British coal were unduly high in

relation to world prices, and wages account for by far the greater part of the pit-head price. The case against the coal-owners turned on the magnitude of the reductions they demanded, their obstinate insistence on longer hours, their blindness to the need for reconstruction, and their general intransigence. But their claim, that a drastic reduction in labour costs would serve in the long run to win back lost markets, though manifestly a gamble, was not quite palpably absurd.

In the case of cotton this claim is palpably absurd. Wages form only a comparatively small proportion of the cost of cotton goods; and the wage-cuts proposed by the Federation would be barely noticeable in the prices of Lancashire products in Eastern markets. The costing figures published by the Cotton Yarn Association make it possible to determine the matter with some precision. These figures, indeed, are so illuminating that we shall quote them in some detail. Taking the cheapest type of Lancashire product, a standard dhootie, wages in the spinning trade account for less than 11 per cent. of the total cost "f.o.b. steamer," i.e., before the cost of shipment has been added in. Wages in the weaving trade (which the Federation cannot control) account for another 18½ per cent. Turn now to the cost of a standard "printer." Spinning wages are only 5½ per cent. of the f.o.b. cost, weaving wages 10½ per cent.; raw cotton is, of course, a heavy item (25 per cent.); but we find an even heavier item in printing charges which are over 30 per cent., not including the finishing charges, which are another 7 per cent. This is perhaps sufficient detail to put the problem in perspective.

On the basis of these figures the reduction in wages suggested by the Federation, drastic though it is from the operatives' point of view, would reduce the total f.o.b. costs of Lancashire products by little more than 1 per cent. in the case of a dhootie and about two-thirds of 1 per cent. in the case of a "printer." It is, we say, palpably absurd to claim that such reductions might be the means of enabling Lancashire to recover her lost markets. The apologies advanced in the Press for the Federation's policy display traces of a consciousness of this absurdity. It is not so much, we are told, the direct advantages of the wage reductions—as that "it is necessary to make a gesture to show the world that the Lancashire trade is bestirring itself to fight outside competition." A pretty gesture indeed! To extend weekly hours beyond the standard laid down as a maximum for the world in the Washington Convention. To revert, in doing so, to the system of a pre-breakfast spell, the abolition of which in 1919 was a long-overdue reform. To make a big cut in wages which are so far from being unduly high that the attractiveness of employment in the cotton trade is notoriously on the decline. To do all these things as the sequel to the failure of the trade either to support the Cotton Yarn Association or to evolve any other constructive plan. We can only surmise how this gesture will impress Lancashire's customers and competitors; but we know that it terrifies us.

The present facts of the cotton situation show something more than the folly of attacking wages and hours. They show that the causes of Lancashire's troubles are not to be found in excessive spinners'



margins. The spinners are to-day, speaking generally, trading at a heavy loss (the losses incidentally being considerably greater than the savings which the contemplated wage-cuts would entail). Quality for quality, Lancashire yarns to-day are decidedly cheaper than those of any other country in the world. Why, then, can she obtain only two-thirds of her pre-war trade? Not, assuredly, because the manufacturers are charging too much. On the contrary, as was well brought out in the tables prepared by Mr. John Grey of Burnley, which formed one of the most interesting features of Mr. Barnard Ellinger's much-discussed recent paper, Lancashire weaving costs, despite higher wage-rates, are materially below the weaving costs of the competitor to whom we are chiefly losing trade, namely, Japan. Where, then, does the trouble lie? In excessive bleaching, dyeing and printing, and finishing charges? Here our charges do compare unfavourably with those of Japan. But the broad conclusion which Mr. Ellinger reaches, and which it is hard to resist in the light of the evidence he has assembled, is that Lancashire's real weakness lies in the loose organization of the industry as a whole, which results in its dissipating its energies on "many hundreds of different chops" as compared with the dozen or so on which Japan concentrates. In a word, the moral of the successful competition of Japan is the superiority, even in such a trade as cotton, of the methods of mass production and distribution. Mr. Ellinger sums up his opinion in an unusually emphatic phrase:—

"Unless Lancashire is prepared to cater for the bulk business on lines similar to the Japanese, it must be content with a mere fringe of the luxury end of the trade."

However this may be in detail, it is overwhelmingly clear that Lancashire's salvation must be found in the principle of "rationalization," and not in that of wage-cuts. It is hardly less clear that the cartel scheme of the Yarn Association still holds the field as the only really feasible first step towards an effective reorganization of the industry. The Yarn Association is to make another attempt to secure the necessary degree of backing for its policy. Perhaps this time it will meet with the required response. In the two months since it suspended its restrictions, much water has flowed under the bridges, and much money has been lost by the spinning trade. The situation is indeed a well-nigh desperate one, and if a desperate situation disposes men, as the Federation proposals show, to acts of folly, it may also help to remove obstacles from the path of wisdom.

The Federation and the Yarn Association comprise for the most part the same membership. The sharp contrast between the policies for which these bodies stand is, therefore, odd; but it is highly characteristic of the bewildered mood of Lancashire. The spinning trade has before it a vital choice between two incompatible policies: the laborious work of reconstruction on the one hand, a reckless plunge into ruinous labour conflict on the other. At present the trade is hardly conscious that these policies are incompatible, and that it must choose between them. Yet so it is. On its choice depends not only its own future, but, it may well prove, the future of much else besides. If, after the demonstration of the folly of the coal-owners, another body of employers in another leading industry sets out on the same course with much less excuse, an unflattering impression of the capacity of our employers in general will be imprinted on the public mind. And the question may be raised whether it is really

safe to leave important affairs in the hands of a class of men so devoid of every statesmanlike quality, and so susceptible to a brainless impulse to imitate each other's worst mistakes.

## THE FINANCIAL RECONSTRUCTION OF GERMANY

TWO books\* have lately appeared, both of them in an English translation also, by the two financial diplomats who, on the German side, have played, perhaps, the greatest individual parts in the extraordinarily rapid financial recovery of Germany from the ruin of 1919-23—Herr Carl Bergmann and Dr. Hjalmar Schacht. Both books have been written not only with the authority of persons who have themselves played a major part behind the scenes in the unrolling of the events described, but also with a remarkable objectivity of vision and evenness of temper. They pass by the external chronicles and well-worn tables of statistics which do duty time after time in the ephemerals of lesser authorities, and are persistently concerned with trying to tell us what really happened and what was really important. The volumes are, therefore, definitive contributions to the history of our times, which should be on the shelves of every historical or economic library.

Herr Bergmann was behind the scenes continuously from the appointment of the Organization Committee of the Reparation Commission in 1919 to the adoption of the Dawes Plan in 1924. He was one of the most successful of that invaluable class of persons who do not occupy gilded chairs, but establish friendly informal relations with the opposite side and are the vehicles of those private communications exploring the possibilities of the situation, yet committing no one to anything, which are the indispensable preliminary to success in formal conference, especially in those conferences which concern more parties than two. It is a class of persons capable of much mischief, it is true, as well as good; for to retain any measure of sincerity along with the requisite pliability of temper is a hard task. It is their duty, like a good hostess, to encourage everyone to talk, to spread an atmosphere of ease, to snub no one and nothing, to be on much the same terms with the great and the small of the social scene alike, never to contradict, never to show impatience, never to appear to step ahead or be before their time, to encourage even inanities if perhaps they may develop into something, and to maintain all the while, if it be possible, a certain standard of consistency and intellectual integrity. Such gifts are required to smooth the edges of international life and to combine the advantages of secret with open diplomacy. Of such gifts Herr Bergmann showed himself a great master, to the advantage of his country and of the world, and through five years, in which nothing was steady and little was honourable and most things were turned upside down, he did not lose the respect of the many different characters whom he was so sedulously and ingeniously edging along the path that they should go. At any rate, it helps history if such a person, when it is all over and what was indiscreet yesterday has become discreet to-day, sits down with a cool head and a steady pen to tell his tale.

On June 16th, 1919, the German delegation left Versailles for Weimar, in order unanimously to recommend its Government to reject the terms of peace, because it saw no possibility of fulfilling the Allies' demands; but the Weimar Government, not dissenting from the truth of this

\* "The History of Reparations," by Carl Bergmann (Benn, 21s), and "The Stabilization of the Mark," by Hjalmar Schacht (Allen & Unwin, 8s. 6d.).

conclusion, deemed that expediency required them to sign. From that day on, the contest for sanity and wisdom had to be fought simultaneously along the two lines represented by the decisions of the Delegation and of its Government respectively. It was my endeavour in a series of books and articles during those years to declare the eventual destination, conceding as little as possible to the diplomatic demands for half-truths or quarter-truths—or 10 per cent. truth to start with; and to throw down with violence the idols of the market place. It was Herr Bergmann's part to put up patiently with nonsense, even sometimes to talk a little of it, and to be forever concerned with the next possible step and content with it, provided that the direction was right. Reading again the history of those years from the angle of Herr Bergmann's vision, one feels indeed a certain inevitability—that the various stages, however imbecile and disastrous in themselves, had to be passed through. But one feels also the extraordinary wastefulness and futility and lack of real necessity in the events of that period.

The footprints of even the greatest historical events are not slowly obliterated; and those who have come out at the other end are inclined to belittle the evils overpassed, like yesterday's toothache. Herr Bergmann's story serves to recall the nature of the risks which were run, the evils which were imposed and endured, and the final fruitlessness of the whole business. So early as April 24th, 1921, the German Government transmitted an offer to accept Reparation terms which would have been more onerous than the Dawes Plan. And it is certain that the embodiment in the Treaty of Versailles of anything approaching the Dawes Plan would have been accepted by Germany with enthusiasm and regarded by the whole world as an act of appeasement and honourable generosity towards defeat.

Thus for no ultimate gains whatever, the risk of general revolution was incurred, the collapse of Germany in particular was twice threatened, the middle classes of Central Europe were beggared, millions of persons suffered penury and starvation, the Ruhr was invaded, and the economic progress of the whole of Europe, including Great Britain, was put back by at least ten years.

When we turn to Dr. Schacht's book, we are concerned, in the main, with a different period and a different method. Dr. Schacht tells, it is true, from its beginning the story of the collapse of the German currency, and this part of his narrative, being an account of the internal economy of Germany as affected by external events, is a useful complement to Herr Bergmann's account of the way in which these external events came to pass. But his main theme is the remarkable achievement of the restoration of the German financial system to a position of confidence and efficiency within the brief period of three years after Herr Bergmann's diplomacy had done its work. Dr. Schacht is a diplomatist too, in his way; but his way is not particularly smooth. Dr. Schacht has shown himself one of Germany's strong men. He has won his victories by determination and strength of character, by great obstinacy and courage in the face of opposition, and by holding tenaciously to a few simple principles, rather than by any especial subtlety of intellect or method. He deserves to be proud of the results. No one would have believed, when he became Currency Commissioner in 1923 and succeeded Herr Havenstein shortly afterwards as President of the Reichsbank, that within four years the financial reconstruction of Germany could possibly have been carried to its present point.

Dr. Schacht's simple principles were the following: that in the conditions of the German currency collapse of 1923 a straightforward return to the gold standard was essential;

that a limitation of the volume of the currency was fundamental and much more important, in the particular circumstances of the case, than discount policy; that he must stand up like a man to vested position, particular interested parties, and political pressure, or perish in the attempt; and, above all, that the restoration of confidence would be cumulative, just as its collapse had been, and that, therefore, to begin the restoration of confidence would be half the battle. All these principles were sound and right; and nothing else was necessary. So far as concerned the gold standard, Germany could obviously not be the one to act as pioneer in currency improvements. In general the rapidity of Dr. Schacht's success was a confirmation of the advice tendered by the foreign experts called in by the German Government in 1922, before the invasion of the Ruhr, that the currency problem would be susceptible of treatment by the recognized methods much more easily and rapidly than was commonly supposed, as soon as the Reparation Commission should make the necessary decisions permitting any solution at all.

Dr. Schacht's reorganization would, of course, have been impracticable without the adoption of the Dawes Plan in 1924. But its most remarkable historical feature is the fact that the mark was first stabilized before the adoption of the Dawes Plan and whilst the Ruhr was still occupied, the Ruhr occupation, by terminating the normal reparation payments, having brought about indirectly the necessary relief to the exchange. "Three dates," Dr. Schacht concludes, "constitute landmarks in the recovery of the German currency. On November 20th, 1923, the mark was stabilized at the rate of a billion paper marks to one gold mark; on April 7th, 1924, the enforcement of credit rationing finally assured the success of the stabilization; and lastly, on October 10th, 1924, the addition of the 800 million gold marks of the Dawes loan to the working capital of the country provided just that economic backing which the situation required."

In his references to the future, Dr. Schacht touches on some matters which are still controversial, in particular the part to be played by foreign loans in the discharge of payments due under the Dawes Plan. As between the policy of putting off the evil day by Germany's borrowing as much as the world can be persuaded to lend her, and the policy of facing an earlier crisis by restricting payments so far as possible to what can be made out of current surplus, Dr. Schacht plumps for the latter. Dr. Schacht has made enemies by so valorously laying about him, and there are problems still ahead which may need a Bergmann as well as a Schacht. But I believe that, in his country's interests, the policy which he is now advocating is probably right; though my sympathies have always been, perhaps, a little too much with those who are facing the facts of to-morrow and too little with the diplomatists who are helping us to last out to-day!

Incidentally Dr. Schacht, whilst deprecating foreign loans by German States and cities, implies that the service of such loans will rank for exchange transfer ahead of reparations, provided that the German Government have duly discharged the latter in terms of marks. This is directly opposed to the opinion just expressed by Mr. Parker Gilbert, the Agent-General for Reparations, in his latest report, where he claims that the service of loans to German States ranks after Reparations for transfer as well as for mark payment. But in this matter I believe that the weight of responsible opinion is against Mr. Gilbert's contention.

A word of praise is due to the translators of the two volumes, Sir Andrew McFadyean and Mr. Ralph Butler.

J. M. KEYNES.



## INDIA AND THE SIMON COMMISSION

POONA, DECEMBER 8RD.

**I**F Mr. Baldwin had wished to set his Indian Commission as difficult a task as possible, in order fully to justify his quotation from Milton, he could scarcely have found a better method than that adopted by Lord Birkenhead and himself. When the new Commission was announced, India was enjoying a period of comparative peace, both from communal riots and political troubles. Opinion on the future Commission was divided. Nearly everyone who had helped to work the 1919 scheme, and many others, who took little interest in politics, had accepted the idea of a Commission as inevitable, and were only interested in its personnel and methods. Against them were ranged the bulk of the "Congress politicians," who could see no use in a Commission to collect evidence which is already in existence, and at the disposal of any Government which has the will to act. They argued, with some justification, that the original insertion of a period of trial in the 1919 Act had been a concession on the part of Mr. Montagu to Conservatives, and that it has been, as many officials would agree, one of the chief reasons for the failure of the dyarchic system.

It was therefore an admirable opportunity for the appointment of a small Indian and English Commission on the lines desired by those Indian politicians who have taken part in working the Reforms. Some Liberals would have been satisfied if the Commission had remained purely Parliamentary, and had merely included Lord Sinha and someone, like the Aga Khan, who might have been raised to the peerage for the purpose. We must remember that the Reform scheme had treated India rather like a set of school-boys who had to be called up periodically for examination in the gentle art of growing fit for self-government, and that this fact had always been thrown up against those "Responsivists," who decided to work under the scheme. Naturally they were sensitive on this point. They could as constitutionalists accept the idea of a statutory Commission. There it was in black and white, an integral part of the scheme, but if there is anything in the art of government, surely it was elementary common sense to make the Commission as little like an examining board as possible. Grant the Congress politicians' argument that there is such a plethora of facts and written opinion in existence that it is hard to see the wood for the trees, yet a good case could have been made out for a mixed travelling Commission making contacts with all types of Indians, and from their own daily intercourse evolving some sane common-sense views on the main subjects at issue.

Lord Birkenhead has adopted the only course which was likely to throw together both Responsivists, and those who condemned the whole scheme from the first. Without troubling to consult even Liberal Indian opinion, he decided on an "impartial" English Commission. The arguments in favour of this idea are doubtless as convincing on paper as those advanced by Lord Macaulay in his famous minute on the teaching of English in India. We are suffering to-day from the logical correctness and entire absence of human understanding displayed by Macaulay. We must hope that India will not suffer as long from the similar mistake made by Lord Birkenhead. Educated Indians have a very subtle sense of humour, and when solemnly approached by the Viceroy, as many Responsivists were, not to be asked their advice but to be presented with a *fait accompli*, it is not surprising that they merely smiled, and departed knowing that they could do nothing, and that the Government would have to extricate itself as best it

could. For five or six years they had tried to work the rusty and inefficient dyarchy machine, and at the end of it all they were not considered as having earned their footing, they were still something apart, liable to be lectured, examined, and patronized. Their feelings would be best understood by someone who gave up a good position to join the Army during the war, and after many adventures by field and flood, found himself being lectured by a junior subaltern upon proper deportment in a Mess.

The disappointment caused by the announcement of the members of the Commission was accentuated by the almost unanimous support given to the proposals by the House of Commons. Indians naturally follow our political movements with an eye to their ultimate effect upon Indian affairs, and the Responsivists have based their policy on the idea that the present Conservative domination of home politics is likely to end within the next few years. They are naturally afraid at the first signs of an agreed Indian policy, which will be accepted by all English parties. If the English parties are to speak with one voice, and adopt something like a policy of continuity, then we shall practically force men of all shades of opinion in India to unite on the other side, and the result will be a rapid growth of bad feeling between the two countries. It will be a poor day for England and India when we shall have to rely for our knowledge of India and our contact with educated Indians upon those whose friendship is due to personal interests or exaggerated communal feeling.

There are, of course, many people in England who view without the least concern the fact that we have quarrelled with both main sections of Indian politicians. Members of Parliament who have not the smallest practical experience of Indian village life, nor of the troubles which beset the average *ryot*, will talk cheerfully about the silent masses about whose interests the Commission is chiefly to concern itself. This may sound very well on a platform at home, but unfortunately is a little out of date. For many years the only contact which the ordinary villager has had with Government is through some kind of educated Indian. The collection of land revenue, though still nominally under British control, has become stereotyped. The same could be said of famine relief. All civil and most criminal cases from the villages are heard by Indian sub-judges or magistrates. Education, medical services, and sanitation, which are the only other official activities which penetrate into the average village, are all "transferred" subjects, and under the control of Indian Ministers. It is also painfully clear that Indian legislators can tackle some subjects which the pre-war administration was forced to leave alone for fear of upsetting social or religious prejudices. An interesting example of this may be seen in the Bombay Presidency, where the breaking up of small agricultural holdings into smaller and more scattered strips on the death of the owner has always been a recognized evil, but one which generations of district officers have held to be incurable. The first effective Bill to deal with this subject of "fragmentation" has recently been introduced by Sir Chunilal Mehta, and has had a very favourable reception.

It would not be worth stressing this last and very obvious point if the Government had not seemed so careless about their relationship with the educated classes in India, and above all the still smaller group who have helped to work the reforms. It is impossible to put the clock back twenty years, even if any sane person wanted to do so. The important question is whether there is any way out of the difficulty raised by the appointment of the Commission. As it is impossible to alter or modify the personnel, it is



clear that the only hope lies in the Committee of Central Legislature which is to work with the Commission.

After discussing the question with several well-known Responsivists, the writer gathered that the only possible solution would lie along the following lines. The Committee (or Commission) from the Indian Legislature should be elected, not nominated. It should sit with the English Commission during all its tours in India, and have exactly the same powers of calling, hearing, and examining witnesses, and collecting evidence. The two groups, Indian and English, would meet continually, and sift the evidence, finally reporting to the Home Government either jointly or separately. In 1930 the "Delegation," which is to be sent from the Indian Legislature to assist the Joint Committee of both British Houses of Parliament, should also be an elected and not a nominated body. Proposals of this kind were foreshadowed in the parliamentary debate, but in such a vague and unsatisfactory manner that the already disgruntled Moderates could get little comfort from them. The attitude—*de haut en bas*—which Lord Birkenhead has chosen to adopt from the first, will make anything in the form of negotiations with the Indian Central Legislature extremely difficult. He has entirely failed to appreciate the difficulties of the type of man whom he would probably call "loyal," but who is really a loyal Indian who believes that he serves his country best by working with England. The other kind of Responsivist, who is definitely anti-British, but who believes in working whatever constitution may be in force, will, of course, tend to drift back into the Congress Party. This is a bad beginning for the Commission, and unless there is a very definite change of temper on the part of the Government during the next two months, we are likely to see a repetition of the boycott of the Milner Commission, but on a larger and more dangerous scale.

G. T. GARRATT.

## LIFE AND POLITICS

MR. SNOWDEN'S resignation from the I.L.P. is a striking incident in the long and bitter quarrel between that body and the official leaders of the Labour Party. This is in essence the inevitable quarrel between the everything-or-nothing idealist and the practical man. Mr. Snowden is also an idealist, but he has learned from experience what can and what cannot be done in the circumstances of the time. He and Mr. MacDonald—who is also at loggerheads with the I.L.P.—have been in office, and they hope to be in office again. To attain office it is necessary, in their opinion, to present Labour Policy in a form easily digestible by the electorate, which does not like fancy foods. Accordingly the Labour Party in its recent programme-making took great care under their guidance to give an air of moderation to its policy for the coming election. The plan was to appeal to the general desire for reform without frightening anyone unnecessarily. Instead of "Socialism in our time," it was "Socialism all in good time." The multitude of citizens who are sick of the Tory Government without being in the least Socialist may be, as Mr. MacDonald and Mr. Snowden calculated, beguiled into voting Labour if only Labour looks sufficiently respectable and promises to keep its hands out of their pockets. In the eyes of the red, or reddish, incorruptibles of the I.L.P. all this is a miserable time-serving, and the I.L.P.ers blew the trumpet of defiance to the official leaders in their new policy, which includes such things as family allowances, nationalization of the banks, State living wage, and surtax for social services only. The breaking point between Mr. Snowden and the I.L.P. has come over this last question, for he has been roundly

rated in the NEW LEADER for his alleged loss of faith in measures of social amelioration.

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So far as an outsider can judge, there is not the least likelihood of the I.L.P. accepting Mr. Snowden's polite suggestion that it should cease to exist. It is true that from the official point of view the separate activity of the I.L.P. branches in the constituencies is an embarrassing nuisance. Labour speaks in two voices, and the rebel voice is often louder and more inspiring than the official voice. This state of things is intolerable to the grave statesmen of the Party. The rebels naturally take a different view. They regard themselves as the repository of the pure word, and their function is to make it as difficult as possible for Socialists to forget Socialism. The I.L.P. is, in short, the ginger group of the Labour Party. One may remark from one's detached standpoint that ginger, though sometimes unpleasantly hot, is a useful stimulus in politics. What life there is in the Tory Party resides in its ginger group; and certainly the possession of a ginger group of Liberals would do that Party no harm—whether in the House of Commons or anywhere else.

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The two voices referred to above are at this moment making their separate appeals for the support of Indian nationalist opinion. In the matter of the Simon Commission the breach between Mr. MacDonald and his Left Wing is serious. It is not merely that there was an open rebellion on the back Labour benches against the Party decision to support the Commission and participate in it. The I.L.P. have actually sent their own representative to India to carry on the attack there, and to counteract what they regard as the backsliding of Mr. MacDonald. Mr. Brailsford has gone so far as to write that the Labour Party under Mr. MacDonald's guidance "has become the complacent partner with the Tory Party in a policy of Imperialism." No wonder Mr. MacDonald is angry and indignant. Healthy criticism within the party is all very well; but language like this means a real revolt. The Indian whole-hoggers are joining in the game, and outdoing even the NEW LEADER in abuse of Mr. MacDonald. Unless the I.L.P. can be brought to heel, and there seems no prospect of that, his leadership will be gravely embarrassed. He has tried to assert himself in his "message," a telling statement of the traditional Labour policy towards India, but it seems possible that the whole-hoggers and hot-gospellers will succeed in making a mess of his policy.

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The MORNING POST, in congratulating Mr. Baldwin on the dignity of the New Year's Honours List, contrasts his reserve with the lavishness of the Coalition. The list, it says, is enough to make Mr. Lloyd George "turn in his bunk." This is all very well, but is not the MORNING POST a little too self-righteous? I would rather say of this Honours List that it is enough to make Mr. Baldwin turn a little uneasily in his easy chair. The conspicuous thing about it is the generosity with which the brief but eloquent words "for political and public service" (we know where to place the emphasis) appear in the announcements. There is really no sign that Mr. Baldwin is allowing himself to be beaten by Mr. Lloyd George or anyone else in eagerness to reward party faithfulness. Politicians in the party have no reason as yet to fear the approach of the day when service to the party ceases to be the first and most obvious qualification for the peerage. Some rather malicious amusement has been caused by the peerage conferred upon Sir Gerald Strickland. This obscure Tory member recently became Prime Minister of Malta, where he spends a good deal of his time. Many critics were unkind enough to suggest that he could not do two jobs at once, and that the proper

thing would be for him at once to resign his seat for Lancaster. Sir Gerald Strickland was obviously not in favour of doing anything so hasty. Mr. Baldwin has found the solution, apparently arguing that Sir Gerald's absence in Malta will be less severely felt if the deprivation falls upon the House of Lords and not the Commons—a course which has the possible merit of placing upon other shoulders the task of retaining Lancaster for the Tory Party.

The DAILY MAIL, as we have not been allowed to forget, has been very angry for a long time because the Russians actually have the audacity to sell their petrol over here. The country has been plastered with solemn warnings to motorists not to use the infamous stuff, and filling stations have been induced to blush scarlet with indignation in the cause. Now presumably motorists use this Bolshevik petrol because it suits them, however little it suits the DAILY MAIL. One has, of course, no sympathy whatever with the clumsy and self-advertising efforts of journals to damn the natural flow of commodities with newsprint. The other day the DAILY MAIL produced as triumphant evidence of the efficacy of its stunt some Customs statistics which show a recent falling-off in the import of Russian oil. The Russian concern here which controls the distribution of oil in Great Britain has a less exciting but certainly a more credible explanation. It seems that the export of petrol from Russia is fixed in amount, and the supply is rationed between various countries. It appears that last year the ration of France and Italy was for some reason increased and the British ration proportionately reduced. The test of whether the DAILY MAIL propaganda has achieved anything is, of course, the actual sales. It is said that last year, the sale of Russian motor spirit in this country increased by over 50 per cent., the distribution having been made from large accumulated stocks.

It seems that we have been doing Chicago an injustice. We have been misled by the reports of the doings of Big Bill Thompson and his cohort of grafters, and the achievements of the bootlegging gangs. It is true that on the average there is in Chicago one murder a day (usually unpunished). These things and others like them have attracted attention altogether out of proportion to the solid Puritanical virtues of the place. I hasten to record that Miss Maude Royden's engagement to lecture in Chicago was cancelled as soon as it became known that she smokes cigarettes.

There has been singularly little comment on the appalling statement in the report of the L.C.C. education officer, that ten thousand London children were killed or injured by motor traffic last year. Can it be that familiarity has so dulled our minds that we accept as inevitable the slaughter of thousands of children in the streets as necessary victims to the glory of speed? London children must cross the streets going to and from school; in many districts they must play in the streets or not play at all. What is the use of looking for a remedy to teaching children "the traffic sense," whatever that may be? It is the nature of children to dart and run and to miscalculate distances, and what is the use of the pious recommendations to motorists to take more care. It is the nature of motorists, however careful, to get along a street as quickly as they can or the law allows. There ought to be a drastic reduction of the speed limit in all streets, not merely in the central streets. And surely the lives of all these children are worth the cost of very heavy public expenditure upon increasing the number of policemen employed to guard crossings. If these things cannot be done, I can only recommend giving the next motorist who kills a child in

the streets a long term of penal servitude, expressly and designedly as a warning to the rest.

Mr. Baldwin, who, they say, likes his history spiced with bias, should enjoy Mr. Belloc's book on Oliver Cromwell in Benn's Sixpenny Library. It is all or nearly all bias. I have just read it with even more exasperation than entertainment. The little book is thoroughly fresh and original—quite the most readable of the score or so sixpenny summaries I happen to have seen. All the same, I think it was a pity to allow Mr. Belloc to make his discoveries about Cromwell in a series intended for circulation among a multitude of readers, many of whom are not armed with the necessary safeguards against him. If one has read a fair amount of Cromwell literature and of the historical authorities on the period, one is quite safe with Mr. Belloc, provided, of course, one has a working knowledge of his peculiar prejudices. This granted, his "debunking" of Cromwell is amusing enough as a game, so long as one is in no danger of taking it seriously. On the other hand, any innocent person trustfully expecting to get a fair estimate of Cromwell from this primer is to be commiserated. He will find Mr. Belloc asserting in that bullying tone of his a view of the Parliamentary struggle against the monarchy, "the people's monarchy," which one may say with equal dogmatism is so grossly one-sided as to be grotesque. Mr. Belloc really is not the man to give us anything but a caricature of Cromwell, nor does he give anything else in this blustering little book. I enjoyed it greatly, for there is something in the mental image of Mr. Belloc, as a colossal and overbearing Don, which appeals to me as comic. I only demur when I am asked to accept Mr. Belloc's Cromwell as Cromwell, or as anything but a convenient Aunt Sally for his stories.

Among the suggestions for "improvements in 1928" with which eminent persons have been enlivening the newspapers, there is one that caught my eye. Lady Cave mentions among changes that are desirable "the right men in office and on the Woolsack." There is no need to despair as regards the last item. If the Government were to carry Lord Cave's famous scheme for the reform of the House of Lords —

KAPPA.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### SEA LAW IN WAR TIME

SIR,—May I be allowed to express warm agreement with your article on this subject of a fortnight ago? You seem to me to put the question on its true basis. The reasons why Great Britain would now be well advised to change her traditional attitude as to this rule of war are practical. We shall gain more by the change than we shall lose by it.

If the matter is discussed as one of principle, no solution is possible. There is no common measure by which to compare the validity of the claim of a belligerent to weaken his adversary by interruption of his commerce—a claim which Englishmen so little suspect of jingoism as John Stuart Mill, Sir Edward Fry and Professor Westlake supported—with the claim of a neutral to pursue his business without interference. All belligerents believe their cause to be just, and if a cause be just, it is difficult to see why a method of warfare which, as such things go, is comparatively humane, should not be employed in support of it. Neutrals, on the other hand, by their very name, decline the responsibility of saying which cause is just, and ask that acts against the peace of the world should be confined within the narrowest limits.

The two arguments never meet. If they are to be reconciled, it must be when wars become police operations, and all States can fairly be asked as good citizens of the Great Community not to obstruct the police in the discharge of their

duty, even if they do not give them active support. President Wilson saw this clearly; let us hope that he has left some successors in America.

Meanwhile, States on this point will be guided by their interests. It is, indeed, highly probable that if nothing is done and the United States is again at war and in possession of a supreme navy, it will adopt, with the camouflage of a blockade or of reprisals, the very doctrine which it denounces when it is a neutral.

At the same time it will be urgently necessary to reconsider the doctrine of a special sanctity of "private" property in time of war. Is the property of a corporation in which a belligerent Government is a large shareholder "private"? Under modern conditions does not a doctrine which protects private property alone give an undue advantage to States whose economic conditions are still mainly individualist against more collectivist communities? Is it reasonable, to take a concrete case, that wheat bought on Government account should be liable to capture, while wheat bought on private account goes through? Must not the exception from capture extend to all, or nearly all, categories of goods not contraband of war, whoever owns them?

These points are too long for discussion in a letter. Provisionally, the conclusion is that we should seek an arrangement with America on the following lines:—

(1) No interference in war time with any property on the high seas except weapons or munitions of war or property seized for the enforcement of a blockade, the term "blockade" being limited by a narrow definition.

(2) Power to any State not a member of the League of Nations, neutral during the war, prosecuted by the authority of the Council of the League of Nations, to recognize the validity of action taken under Article 16 of the Covenant, without thereby being guilty of unneutral conduct.

—Yours, etc.,  
December 27th, 1927.

A LAWYER.

### OTTERS IN DEVON

SIR,—With regard to Mr. Arthur Heinemann's letter in your issue of December 17th, in which he states that he has found the remains of several frogs skinned back to the eyes, I would like to confirm his conclusion that this was the work of an otter; and to add that it was probably the work of a bitch otter. One summer day I watched a bitch with cubs, playing on the bank of one of the derelict clay-pits on Merton moor in Devon; and after the play, I watched her catching frogs in the water, and flaying them on the bank. I was lying on the opposite bank, about twenty yards away, and she was aware of my presence, but after a stare and a swim half-way across the pond to inspect me, she swam back and paid no more attention to me.

So far as I could see, her way of skinning the frogs was to stand on them, nip the skin, and then lift up her head. While she was doing this with one frog, a cub sneaked one off the pile, and dragged it away and began chewing. Whether it managed to eat any of the frog I do not know. The cubs were quite small, about nine inches long, excluding the rudder, or tail.

Mr. Arthur Heinemann probably knows as much about wild otters as anyone in the West Country, and what he says about the infinite variations in behaviour and action in wild animals generally, is entirely borne out by my own experiences of them. I would go even further, and say that in their emotions and feelings they are very near to us indeed. Mr. Heinemann, I remember, once had a tame badger that got caught in a gin set by a chicken farmer; and the farmer came to him in a great rage and told him to come and see it killed. When the badger saw its friend it jumped up and hugged his arm, and *cried*. It clung there, and the farmer was so moved that he declared he wasn't going to kill it: let someone else do it, he wouldn't. The farmer's intuition, on that occasion, ruled his thought.

Now Mr. Heinemann says that I have made no mention in "Tarka the Otter" of the otter's delight in running water. If he would read the book again he would see that this joy in the water-life is one of the underlying themes of the story. The sliding down icy mud into the river, &c., is fully

described. As for falling water, this description occurs on page 140: "Tarka ran back to the river, and after eating fish, he played with a rope of water twisting and untwisting out of a drain, trying to catch it between his paws and bite it as it plattered on his face and chest."—Yours, &c.,

HENRY WILLIAMSON.

North Devon.

### "THE CAVE MAN"

SIR,—Your dramatic critic Omicron is as illuminating when writing of "March Hares" as he is dim when "The Cave Man" is considered.

He says (or is it she?) "It is clean, wholesome, cheery, and good-natured (qualities I detest)."

Omicron must rule out for himself some good drama. Is only what is unclean, unwholesome, cheerless, and ill-natured dramatically effective? When genius lays hold of human nature, whatever its quality, good or bad wholly or in part, does not good drama come as naturally as ice follows frost?

The qualities Omicron mentions may make "The Cave Man" ineffective, but it seems generalization rather than particularization in Omicron's notes.—Yours, &c.,

FRANK F. SMITH.

51, Stratford Street, Oxford.  
December 23rd, 1927.

## FOUR ENGLISH HISTORIANS

### I.—HUME\*

By LYTTON STRACHEY.

IN what resides the most characteristic virtue of humanity? In good works? Possibly. In the creation of beautiful objects? Perhaps. But some would look in a different direction, and find it in detachment. To all such, David Hume must be a great saint in the calendar; for no mortal being was ever more completely divested of the trammels of the personal and the particular, none ever practised with a more consummate success the divine art of impartiality. And certainly to have no axe to grind is something very noble and very rare. It may be said to be the antithesis of the bestial. A series of creatures might be constructed, arranged according to their diminishing interest in the immediate environment, which would begin with the amoeba and end with the mathematician. In pure mathematics the maximum of detachment appears to be reached: the mind moves in an infinitely complicated pattern, which is absolutely free from temporal considerations. Yet this very freedom—the essential condition of the mathematician's activity—perhaps gives him an unfair advantage. He can only be wrong—he cannot cheat. But the metaphysician can. The problems with which he deals are of overwhelming importance to himself and the rest of humanity; and it is his business to treat them with an exactitude as unbiassed as if they were some puzzle in the theory of numbers. That is his business—and his glory. In the mind of a Hume one can watch at one's ease this superhuman balance of contrasting opposites—the questions of so profound a moment, the answers of so supreme a calm. And the same beautiful quality may be traced in the current of his life, in which the wisdom of philosophy so triumphantly interpenetrated the vicissitudes of the mortal lot.

His history falls into three stages—youth, maturity, repose. The first was the most important. Had Hume died at the age of twenty-six his real work in the world would have been done, and his fame irrevocably established. Born in 1711, the younger son of a small Scottish land-

\* The second article of this series—on Gibbon—will appear in our next issue.



owner, he was very early dominated by that passion for literary pursuits which never left him for the rest of his life. When he was twenty-two one of those crises occurred—both physical and mental—which not uncommonly attack young men of genius when their adolescence is over, and determine the lines of their destiny. Hume was suddenly overcome by restlessness, ill-health, anxiety, and hesitation. He left home, went to London, and then to Bristol, where, with the idea of making an independent fortune, he became a clerk in a merchant's office. "But," as he wrote long afterwards in his autobiography, "in a few months I found that scene totally unsuitable to me." No wonder; and then it was that, by a bold stroke of instinctive wisdom, he took the strange step which was the starting-point of his career. He went to France, where he remained for three years—first at Rheims, then at La Flèche, in Anjou—entirely alone, with only just money enough to support an extremely frugal existence, and with only the vaguest prospects before him. During those years he composed his "Treatise of Human Nature," the masterpiece which contains all that is most important in his thought. The book opened a new era in philosophy. The last vestiges of theological prepossessions—which were still faintly visible in Descartes and Locke—were discarded; and reason, in all her strength and all her purity, came into her own. It is in the sense that Hume gives one of being committed absolutely to reason—of following wherever reason leads, with a complete, and even reckless, confidence—that the great charm of his writing consists. But it is not only that: one is not alone; one is in the company of a supremely competent guide. With astonishing vigour, with heavenly lucidity, Hume leads one through the confusion and the darkness of speculation. One has got into an aeroplane, which has glided imperceptibly from the ground; with thrilling ease one mounts and mounts; and, supported by the mighty power of intellect, one looks out, to see the world below one, as one has never seen it before. In the *Treatise* there is something that does not appear again in Hume's work—a feeling of excitement—the excitement of discovery. At moments he even hesitates, and stands back, amazed at his own temerity. "The intense view of these manifold contradictions and imperfections in human reason has so wrought upon me, and heated my brain, that I am ready to reject all belief and reasoning, and can look upon no opinion even as more probable or likely than another. Where am I, or what? From what causes do I derive my existence, and to what condition shall I return? Whose favour shall I court, and whose anger must I dread? What beings surround me? and on whom have I any influence, or who have influence on me? I am confounded with all these questions, and begin to fancy myself in the most deplorable condition imaginable, environed with the deepest darkness, and utterly deprived of the use of every member and faculty." And then his courage returns once more, and he speeds along on his exploration.

The *Treatise*, published in 1738, was a complete failure. For many years more Hume remained in poverty and insignificance. He eked out a living by precarious secretarships, writing meanwhile a series of essays on philosophical, political, and æsthetic subjects, which appeared from time to time in small volumes, and gradually brought him a certain reputation. It was not till he was over forty, when he was made Librarian to the Faculty of Advocates in Edinburgh, that his position became secure. The appointment gave him not only a small competence, but the command of a large library; and he determined to write the history of England—a task which occupied him for the next ten years.

The History was a great success; many editions were printed; and in his own day it was chiefly as a historian that Hume was known to the general public. After his death, his work continued for many years the standard history of England, until, with a new age, new fields of knowledge were opened up and a new style of historical writing became fashionable. The book is highly typical of the eighteenth century. It was an attempt—one of the very earliest—to apply intelligence to the events of the past. Hitherto, with very few exceptions (Bacon's "Henry the Seventh" was one of them) history had been in the hands of memoir writers, like Commines and Clarendon, or moralists, like Bossuet. Montesquieu, in his "Considérations sur les Romains," had been the first to break the new ground; but his book, brilliant and weighty as it was, must be classed rather as a philosophical survey than a historical narration. Voltaire, almost exactly contemporary with Hume, was indeed a master of narrative, but was usually too much occupied with discrediting Christianity to be a satisfactory historian. Hume had no such *arrière pensée*; he only wished to tell the truth as he saw it, with clarity and elegance. And he succeeded. In his volumes—especially those on the Tudors and Stuarts—one may still find entertainment and even instruction. Hume was an extremely intelligent man, and anything that he had to say on English history could not fail to be worth attending to. But, unfortunately, mere intelligence is not itself quite enough to make a great historian. It was not simply that Hume's knowledge of his subject was insufficient—that the enormous number of facts, which have come into view since he wrote, have made so many of his statements untrue and so many of his comments unmeaning; all that is serious, but it is not more serious than the circumstance that his cast of mind was in reality ill-fitted for the task he had undertaken. The virtues of a metaphysician are the vices of a historian. A generalized, colourless, unimaginative view of things is admirable when one is considering the law of causality, but one needs something else if one has to describe Queen Elizabeth.

This fundamental weakness is materialized in the style of the History. Nothing could be more enchanting than Hume's style when he is discussing philosophical subjects. The grace and clarity of exquisite writing are enhanced by a touch of colloquialism—the tone of a polished conversation. A personality—a most engaging personality—just appears. The cat-like touches of ironic malice—hints of something very sharp behind the velvet—add to the effect. "Nothing," Hume concludes, after demolishing every argument in favour of the immortality of the soul, "could set in a fuller light the infinite obligations which mankind have to divine revelation, since we find that no other medium could ascertain this great and important truth." The sentence is characteristic of Hume's writing at its best, where the pungency of the sense varies in direct proportion with the mildness of the expression. But such effects are banished from the History. A certain formality, which Hume doubtless supposed was required by the dignity of the subject, is interposed between the reader and the author; an almost completely latinized vocabulary makes vividness impossible; and a habit of *oratio obliqua* has a deadening effect. We shall never know exactly what Henry the Second said—in some uncouth dialect of French or English—in his final exasperation against Thomas of Canterbury; but it was certainly something about "a set of fools and cowards," and "vengeance," and "an upstart clerk." Hume, however, preferred to describe the scene as follows: "The king himself being vehemently agitated, burst forth with an exclamation against his servants, whose want of zeal, he said, had so long left him exposed to the

enterprises of that ungrateful and imperious prelate." Such phrasing, in conjunction with the Middle Ages, is comic. The more modern centuries seem to provide a more appropriate field for urbanity, aloofness, and commonsense. The measured cynicism of Hume's comments on Cromwell, for instance, still makes good reading—particularly as a corrective to the *O, altitudo!* sentimentalities of Carlyle.

Soon after his completion of the History, Hume went to Paris as the Secretary to the English Ambassador. He was now a celebrity, and French society fell upon him with delirious delight. He was flattered by princes, worshipped by fine ladies, and treated as an oracle by the *philosophes*. To such an extent did he become the fashion, that it was at last positively *de rigueur* to have met him, and a lady who, it was discovered, had not even seen the great philosopher, was banished from Court. His appearance, so strangely out of keeping with mental agility, added to the fascination. "His face," wrote one of his friends, "was broad and flat, his mouth wide, and without any other expression than that of imbecility. His eyes vacant and spiritless, and the corpulence of his whole person was far better fitted to communicate the idea of a turtle-eating alderman than of a refined philosopher." All this was indeed delightful to the French. They loved to watch the awkward affability of the uncouth figure, to listen in rapt attention to the extraordinary French accent, and when, one evening, at a party, the adorable man appeared in a charade as a sultan between two lovely ladies and could only say, as he struck his chest, over and over again, "Eh bien, mesdemoiselles, et bien, vous voilà donc!" their ecstasy reached its height. It seemed indeed almost impossible to believe in this combination of the outer and inner man. Even his own mother never got below the surface. "Our Davie," she is reported to have said, "is a fine good-natured cratur, but uncommon wake-minded." In no sense whatever was this true. Hume was not only brilliant as an abstract thinker and a writer; he was no less competent in the practical affairs of life. In the absence of the Ambassador he was left in Paris for some months as *chargé d'affaires*, and his dispatches still exist to show that he understood diplomacy as well as ratiocination.

Entirely unmoved by the raptures of Paris, Hume returned to Edinburgh, at last a prosperous and wealthy man. For seven years he lived in his native capital, growing comfortably old amid leisure, books, and devoted friends. It is to this final period of his life that those pleasant legends belong which reveal the genial charm, the happy temperament, of the philosopher. There is the story of the tallow-chandler's wife, who arrived to deliver a monitory message from on High, but was diverted from her purpose by a tactful order for an enormous number of candles. There is the well-known tale of the weighty philosopher getting stuck in the boggy ground at the base of the Castle rock, and calling on a passing old woman to help him out. She doubted whether any help should be given to the author of the *Essay on Miracles*. "But, my good woman, does not your religion as a Christian teach you to do good, even to your enemies?" "That may be," was the reply, "but ye shallna get out of that till ye become a Christian yersell: and repeat the Lord's Prayer and the Belief"—a feat that was accomplished with astonishing alacrity. And there is the vision of the mountainous metaphysician seated, amid a laughing party of young ladies, on a chair that was too weak for him, and suddenly subsiding to the ground.

In 1776, when Hume was sixty-five, an internal complaint, to which he had long been subject, completely undermined his health, and recovery became impossible. For many months he knew he was dying, but his mode of

life remained unaltered, and, while he gradually grew weaker, his cheerfulness continued unabated. With ease, with gaiety, with the simplicity of perfect taste, he gently welcomed the inevitable. This wonderful equanimity lasted till the very end. There was no ostentation of stoicism, much less any Addisonian dotting of death-bed i's. Not long before he died he amused himself by writing his autobiography—a model of pointed brevity. In one of his last conversations—it was with Adam Smith—he composed an imaginary conversation between himself and Charon, after the manner of Lucian: "Have a little patience, good Charon, I have been endeavouring to open the eyes of the Public. If I live a few years longer, I may have the satisfaction of seeing the downfall of some of the prevailing systems of superstition." But Charon would then lose all temper and decency. "You loitering rogue, that will not happen these many hundred years. Do you fancy I will grant you a lease for so long a term? Get into the boat this instant, you lazy, loitering rogue." Within a few days of his death, he wrote a brief letter to his old friend, the Comtesse de Boufflers; it was the final expression of a supreme detachment. "My disorder," he said, "is a diarrhœa, or disorder in my bowels, which has been gradually undermining me these two years; but, within these six months, has been visibly hastening me to my end. I see death approach gradually, without anxiety or regret. I salute you, with great affection and regard, for the last time."

## THE DRAMA PLUM PUDDING

CHRISTMAS is generally recognized as being the feast of childhood, in lame recognition of the fact that the Prince of Peace once dwelt among us a child, a miracle which even hardfaced men would be unwilling to see entirely forgotten. Thus, as Christmas Day approaches, all sections of the community may be observed throwing to the wind their elaborately acquired inhibitions and endeavouring to capture a divine spontaneity. Naturally the theatre does not lag behind in "the great mundane movement," and during the month of January most entertainments are advertised as being slightly different to the normal. But managers are, it must be admitted, in a hard plight. First, they have to think of children in the evangelical sense of the word: but the problem is linked with that known as "What to do with our boys" (among whom may be included girls), during the Christmas holidays, and the issue is further obscured by the antics of the elderly, endeavouring, with some success, to be even more infantile than usual.

In the grand simple Victorian era, the *union sacrée* was built up round the Drury Lane pantomime. In a "Tales of a Grandfather" way I am glad to have seen Dan Leno on these occasions, though the pleasure was not so much in the pantomime itself as in the fact that the early hour at which it started necessitated having lunch at 11.30. Obviously the entertainment was less designed for children than for alcoholized industrials replete from Simpsons. Still it did provide one of those great syntheses the nineteenth century loved too well. Every year a clamour goes up for "keeping this tradition alive." Personally, I think it was a thoroughly bad tradition, and I should be very glad to see it die. It may be seen in its agonies at the Lyceum Theatre ("The Queen of Hearts"), where the audience is simple enough to love ritual for its own sake, and at the Garrick Theatre ("Robinson Crusoe"), where a larger audience might well have collected to see a faithful repetition of what people thought they wanted. For here they all are, the ruin of good stories, the repetition of stale jokes, women dressed up as men, and men dressed up as women, transformation scenes made imbecile by the films, fairy queens who barely sing, and choruses who scarcely dance, and in the case of "Robinson Crusoe," the reduc-



tion to absurdity of one of the favourite stories of childhood, one of those stories of almost superhuman grit which children adore, because, as an eighteenth-century psychologist put it, "it expands their little minds." Certainly children liked these two "pantos," but then children like anything, though some have been known to jib at their fourth visit to "Peter Pan," a play designed for the third section of the Christmas public—the infantile old. It is not enough to amuse a child, a child should be amused in the right way, and we should not rely on the boredom and gratitude of the young.

Miss Jean Sterling Mackinlay, at the Rudolf Steiner Hall, amuses children in the right way, though I did not think the "Dr. Dolittle" play, which forms the second half of the programme, was one of her happiest efforts. The attitude to animals was, I thought, tiresome. But her songs, her rendering of nursery rhymes, her little dramatic sketches, the complete absence of either condescension or uplift, showed an instinctive understanding of the child mind. The divorce from the nineteenth century was complete. There was nothing for grown-ups at all. What a relief! The same may almost be said of "Dick Whittington" at the delightful Children's Theatre (Ignition House, Endell Street). "Dick Whittington" is only incidentally a pantomime, because at the Children's Theatre the authors have merely taken one of the most delectable dream fantasies in the world, and stuck closely to it. The result is a charming little play, deliciously interpreted. Dick and his Cat were really human and lovable people. Very rarely did the Devil's hoof appear in the form of a little conventional morality; for instance, we were told more than once that no good girl has ever been ugly. Children can see through that sort of rot, even if it takes in adults. Still, the audience was kind enough to overlook it. But perhaps the most delightful feature of the Children's Theatre is that it really is for children, and adults, one feels, are only admitted on sufferance. The sight of the local youth planking down their sixpences and stalking in to their seats, so warmed the cockles of my Scrooge-like heart that I almost wanted to be young again. The Children's Theatre is a contribution to civilization, consoling in our anguished and cynical age.

The problem of "our boys" has also to be restated in terms of modern ingenuity. The advent of the "thriller" seems to have knocked out a good deal of old-fashioned melodrama, of the kind that pleased my own more naive generation. Perhaps "Broadway" might be above the heads of some, but any normal schoolboy would probably like "The Wrecker" (though it cannot be said to have much connection with Christmas) more than any play specially written for his benefit. Of the older-fashioned "boys' entertainments," that hardy annual "Treasure Island" (Golders Green Hippodrome) is one of the best. But the book has suffered a sea change and is now mainly comic in tone. It is quite impossible to take Long John Silver seriously, and young Hawkins is so much the most gifted of cabin-boys, and shouts "God save the King" so often that the world, we know, must be made safe for virtue by him. The "bad language," however, brought down roars of laughter, though it was language only conventionally wicked. A good melodrama, though I doubt if admirers of Stevenson will much care about it. But when we are entertaining "our boys," we must remember the revolution worked by the films. What boy would not prefer, to any "Treasure Island," such a film as "Chang," in which adventure is woven into the very texture of life, and is not the mere daydream of a slippered *littérateur*. There is a grandeur in "Chang," as well as passages of incredible beauty which, despite lapses caused by a desire to be funny, make "Chang" a notable event, and if we are on the question of morals, it is a film likely to make boys nobler in our public streets without their noticing that moral questions arise. "Chang" has some of the qualities of "Robinson Crusoe." And while on pure adventure Mr. Fairbanks is with us once more in "The Thief of Bagdad" and "Robin Hood," far better adventure plays than anything the legitimate stage can hope to produce, and perfect entertainments for the holidays if boys must be boys all the time. Generally, however, the intellectual

interests of children are decided by the time they are twelve, and fortunately there is still a little Strindberg running for our more precocious juveniles.

Olympia has nothing to do with Christmas, and little to do with boys. It is a spectacle calculated to appeal to all. The marvellous dogs, the superb horses, the extraordinary man who swims about in a tank with crocodiles, the man without nerves who is shot forty feet out of a gun, the musical seal, the adorable Barquette, and many other "turns," should be missed by nobody. Then when you come out of the Circus, the number of sideshows passes belief. Anyone could while away a whole day in the interminable arcades packed full of eccentricity and trials of skill. Unfortunately, there is such a crowd, and the area covered by the Fair is so vast, that it might be unsafe to let a child run about in it alone. The whole effect is that of the Arabian Nights, and the Arabian Nights are, for some reason, supposed to be suitable for Christmas. So perhaps on this count the Olympia Fair can squeak in as a Christmas entertainment.

And this last reflection brings one back to the starting point. What is a Christmas entertainment? Does it mean anything or nothing? Has it got something to do with Christmas, or only with the holidays? Or is a good Christmas entertainment merely a good entertainment from which the word Christmas might well be omitted? A little hard thinking would probably clear away some intellectual cobwebs and enliven the season.

FRANCIS BIRRELL.

## PLAYS AND PICTURES

THE first half of "Tod the Tailor" (Mr. W. Griffin's play, just produced by the Art Theatre Guild) held out hopes which, it must be admitted, the second half did not quite fulfil. Incredible as it may appear, Mr. Griffin really seemed anxious at first to make a work of art out of his "new play on an old model," the old model in this case being evidently the "Knight of the Burning Pestle." The prologue setting forth the Tailor's life at home, the first act at the Court of a caricature of modern Royalty in the very latest manner, and the second act, when he captures a tame dragon, and even part of the third act, when he refuses the King's daughter, were as witty and as "pretty" as could be. Then unfortunately the author, "forgetting the bright speed he had in his high mountain cradle," got bogged in "a hushed Chorasman waste," and degenerated into a young man with a message, quite a good message, but still a message that destroyed the shape of his fantasy. "Oh, the pity of it, Iago, the pity of it." Must we be "helped," even in a play advertised as a Christmas entertainment? It is so rare for a dramatist to try to be an artist that one is tempted to regard people like Mr. Griffin as "Belials" "making the worse appear the better cause." But this is not to say that "Tod the Tailor" is not far more hopeful than ninety-nine out of a hundred plays produced to-day. Mr. Griffin has a high theatrical sense, a fine cynicism (which he seems ashamed of), and a fresh, original wit. If he can only stop trying to be a clergyman, he might go anywhere and do anything. But preaching is so much easier than art. The play was imaginatively produced in a witty *décor*, and acted sympathetically.

"Whispering Wires," the new thriller at the Apollo, has, I think, been rather unfairly treated by the Press. It gets under weigh rather slowly; and the success of the private detectives in keeping out the police seems improbable, while I suspect the plot of breaking down on more than one occasion. On the other hand (which is much more important) the murder itself is very ingenious, and *très théâtre*. Every curtain provides a genuine thrill, and an atmosphere of brooding agitation reigns throughout the second act. There is considerable ingenuity in the way in which suspicion lights in turn on everyone concerned. Many will probably guess the murderer, though few the manner of the murder, while the catastrophe itself is unforeseeable and cunning. Connoisseurs of the thriller should not miss "Whispering Wires." OMICRON.



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By BERNARD SHAW

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MATINEES ONLY. DAILY, at 2.15.

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LONDON PAVILION. DAILY, at 2.30 and 8.30. SUNDAYS, at 8 o'clock.

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The OLD VIC COMPANY with SYBIL THORNDIKE in

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POPULAR PRICES. SPECIAL REDUCTION FOR CHILDREN.

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GEORGE ROBEY in "BITS AND PIECES."

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ROYALTY. (Ger. 2690.) NIGHTLY, 8.40. Mats., Tues., Thurs., Sat., 2.30.

## "THE CROOKED BILLET." By DION TITHERADGE.

Leon Quartermaine, Mercia Swinburne, Barbara Gott, C. V. France.

SHAFTESBURY. (Gerr. 6666.)

NIGHTLY, at 8.30.

MATINEES, WEDNESDAY &amp; SATURDAY, at 2.30.

## "THE HIGH ROAD." By FREDERICK LONSDALE.

ST. MARTIN'S. Gerr. 3416. Evgs., 8.30 sharp. Mats., Tues. &amp; Fri., 2.30.

## "THE SILVER CORD." By SIDNEY HOWARD.

LILIAN BRAITHWAITE.

CLAIRE EAMES.

WYNDHAM'S

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NIGHTLY, at 8.30.

MATINEES, WEDNESDAY &amp; SATURDAY, at 2.30.

## "THE WAY OF THE WORLD."

EDITH EVANS.

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CAPITOL,

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CONTINUOUS, 1 to 11. SUNDAYS, 6 to 11.

Commencing Sunday, January 8th.

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With JETTA GOUDAL, Victor Varconi, and Joseph Schildkraut.

STOLL PICTURE THEATRE,

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DAILY, 2 to 10.45. (SUNDAYS, 6 to 10.30.)

January 9th, 10th and 11th. BEN LYON and Pauline Starke in "THE PERFECT SAP"; PAUL WEGENER in "SOULS AFLAME."

January 12th, 13th and 14th. CLARA BOW and Esther Ralston in "CHILDREN OF DIVORCE"; RALPH INCE in "BREED OF THE SEA."

On the Stage: FLORENCE OLDHAM, "The Whispering Soprano."

## THE WORLD OF BOOKS

### THE IMPERIALIST

THERE have already appeared several biographies or appreciations of Cecil Rhodes, and more than one of them has been written by a personal friend. "Rhodes: a Life," by J. G. McDonald (Allan, 21s.), is also the work of a close friend and associate. Friendship for a biographer has both its advantages and disadvantages, particularly where, as is the case with Rhodes, the life of the biographee has been the centre of a storm of controversy. Mr. McDonald knew Rhodes only in the latter part of his life, and was not intimately associated with him until about 1896. His hero was already a great man, the Colossus who had had a nasty fall, but was in process of resurrecting himself. Mr. McDonald watched this process from very close quarters with sympathy and affection. He has written a full biography of Rhodes from the standpoint of one who shared his views, approved of his ideals, admired his character, and enjoyed his confidence. It was worth writing and is worth reading, for it gives out a clear-cut picture of Rhodes's life and character. The casual reader who does not look beyond the momentary pleasure of a book and a lamp and a fire will find it a good biographical story. The more philosophical or political minded will find much to interest him in it; but he must read it with both eyes and the whole of his mind open. For it has the defects of all biographies written by the friends and disciples of great men. The colours are heightened, the dark shadows lightened, the wrinkles are smoothed out, and even the bald patch is transformed into a more than usually high and noble forehead.

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The biography of a great man has to deal with the man and his work, which, though interrelated, are not the same thing nor properly subjected to the same kind of moral judgments. Mr. McDonald is more satisfying and convincing, as a biographer, when he writes about the man than about his work. The psychology of Rhodes was curious. He liked to talk of himself as a dreamer. "Why do I love my garden?" he would say to a favoured visitor. "Because I love to dream there. Why not come with me and dream also to-morrow morning?" In a sense he was right; he was a dreamer and spent his life in a dream. Ideas, especially if they were vast and simple ideas, appealed to him. He dreamed over them until, haloed with sentimentality, they became an obsession. A vast empire, an enormous telegraph or railway line from the Cape to Cairo, these were the substance of his dreams, and with a copy of Marcus Aurelius's meditations in one pocket and a volume of Gibbon's "Decline and Fall" in the other, he set out to make them realities. Unlike most dreamers, he usually succeeded. He succeeded partly by luck, and partly because, like all the greatest men of action, he combined other qualities with his habit of dreaming and with his interest in ideas—an inflexible will, a "magnetic personality," a passion for work, a sense of the immense importance of practical details, and the insensitiveness and unscrupulousness which save the man of action from hesitation. The elements of Rhodes's psychology are the stuff that cranks are made of, and a little turn of Fortune's screw, denying him wealth and power, might have left him all his life a crank. As it is, he may take his place, a little below Alexander and Napoleon, among the great men of action.

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The mind of Rhodes is clearly displayed in Mr. McDonald's book, and also his character. He must have

been a very likable man when he was not perverted by megalomania or illness. Simple, unpretentious, kind, extraordinarily generous, quick-tempered—he was one of those men who easily acquire devoted friends and disciples and become heroes to their private secretaries, if not to their valets. In fact, in Rhodes, the man, the moralist may find much to admire and little to censure; indeed, he may confine himself to pointing that very ancient moral—the bad effect of great wealth and the worse effect of great power on a good character.

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Rhodes's work and his political ideas raise a very different question, and here Mr. McDonald is not a safe guide to anyone who has not a good deal of knowledge of the history of imperialism in Africa. His book is an apology and his attitude is that of the counsel for the defence who ignores the strong and emphasizes the weak points against himself. Rhodes was an imperialist, and there is much more to be said against imperialism and his achievements in South Africa than would appear from Mr. McDonald's pages. Rhodes's imperialist policy sprang from his love of size, from his love of power, and from his ingenuous beliefs regarding the relations between God and what he called "the English-speaking race." Rhodes had a passion for mere bigness, whether in mountains, views, railway lines, joint-stock companies, or empires, and in this he was both the product and prophet of his age, the late nineteenth century. Many people have since learned to doubt the truth of the doctrine: "The larger the better," particularly when applied to empires. Rhodes was instinctively a ruler of men, and it was this instinct, combined with his love of largeness, which made him an active imperialist. Luckily he found a political creed which showed him that his instincts and desires were reasonable. Very early in life he came to believe that "we" (i.e., the "English-speaking race") "are the first race in the world, and that the more of the world we inhabit, the better it is for the human race." Later he expressed the same thought by saying that God "is manifestly fashioning the English-speaking race as the chosen instrument by which he will bring in a state of society based on Justice, Liberty, and Peace," and he argued that he would be helping God by acquiring as much territory in Africa for the Empire as he possibly could.

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With these instincts and beliefs, Rhodes proceeded to pursue his policy of "expansion" with a vigour and unscrupulousness which brought immediate success. Little is said about the unscrupulousness by Mr. McDonald, except with regard to the Jameson raid, which is represented as an unfortunate and temporary lapse. No one would gather from his book that there is another side to the treatment of Lobengula by Rhodes and the Chartered Company, and that the expropriation of the African, which was involved in the policy of painting South Africa red, has created "the native problem"—a problem which, according to the present High Commissioner, has brought the country to the edge of an abyss. Rhodes's "dreams" implied the permanent subjection of an enormous majority of natives to a small minority of white men. It is becoming more and more clear that this political and economic subjection cannot be maintained indefinitely, and that imperialism has brought its followers to the edge of a perilous abyss.

LEONARD WOOLF.

## REVIEWS

## THE TWO JAPANS

**Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan.** By LAFCADIO HEARN. Two vols. (Cape. 3s. 6d. each.)

**The Civilization of Japan.** By J. INGRAM BRYAN. (Williams & Norgate. 2s.)

FOREIGN residents in Japan mostly affect to have discovered for themselves the truth about the country and its people, but probably a great many of them never make decided statements on so large and difficult a subject without afterwards wishing that they had not. This fact must regulate the spirits of the reviewer who takes up Mr. Cape's convenient reprint of Hearn's early miscellany with a remembrance of the exaggerated honours paid to Hearn by the Japanese. Hearn's aromatic, soft, and empurpled prose accounts of Japan might be accepted with thanks, although one might not believe them—Hearn hardly believed them himself; one has had such sunny hours by the twisted pines of those shores, such simple refinements in the light and chairless rooms of country inns, such golden coldness and calm in the towering of Fuji-san in a windy sunrise, such child-like blessing and elegant memento from young men and women, that one hesitates to withhold full applause from a catalogue of "only the beautiful" in Japan. Moreover, the world must hold fast to its Japan, as we must keep our Shelley and Coleridge, in its bright distinction, blossomed innocence, hermit-like quietness; we must for our own salvation preserve that vision as a challenge to our own clumsiness, high-powered progress, and tumultuous publicities. This must be done indeed, and at the same time the new generation in Japan are right in wishing us to be informed of the modern conditions of their country; we must be visionaries and economists at once—a requirement which sounds paradoxical, but the parallels of which are being fulfilled in British character generation after generation. Long live the Japan of the cherry and the maple, the writing-brush and the doll's festival, the pilgrim's bell and tradesman's midnight flute; and success to the Japan of the universities, iron-foundries, electric plants, and liners. They can co-exist and they must.

But still we are not wholly devoted to Lafcadio Hearn as the exponent of Japanese delights. That dexterous journalist has the obvious fault of plastering a delicate grace with sticky epithets. His highly finished views have a resemblance to the commercial art issued with no small acumen to foreigners passing through Yokohama. If he wishes to inform us that a temple is on the large scale, he runs through a succession of "large" phrases; if it is mystery which he intends to broadcast, then all the adjectives he can lay his hands on to label mystery fill the page. He seldom varies his tone or brings off an epithet which he has not already worked to death, and the effect is a misty indistinction—it is not without point that one sees in the first section of his book the expressions, "all is unspeakably pleasurable and new," "this consciousness is transfigured inexpressibly," "some charm unutterable in the morning air." That is his method—escape through the roof of language. But Hearn, of course, has observation and opportunity, and collects a great number of Japanese *notabilia* into his album, which is to be opened at random rather than attempted in one valiant advance. Having touched on his literary habit and his main merit (apart from his educational work), one must notice his attitude. A Western mind applying itself to Japan must make a powerful effort to unbind its prejudices and unconsidered acceptances. But it must bring a steady principle and standard both of human duty and human achievement. Hearn did not. Never having had a real home in the Western life, he fastened with avidity upon the "floating world" of Japan, like many smaller men than he. His writing is dominated by a desire to make the East his spiritual home. He produces for himself a hyperbolic unction, such as may be indicated in such a flourish as "That trees, at least Japanese trees, have souls, cannot seem an unnatural fancy. . . ." A blinkered æsthete, he does well to choose his beauties, but he persists in going farther, and preaching the moral example of Japan, as though morality and pretty temples were interchangeable terms. If one has read Hearn's letters, such as those recently edited by Professor Ichikawa at Tokyo, one knows that his comments on Japanese

actualities (*i.e.*, those affecting his own interests) could be very bitter; and that fact is apt to rise with a cynical stare when one is reading his glorifications of Japanese civilization. His "Glimpses" end on the note, "It should never be forgotten that Old Japan was quite as much in advance of the nineteenth century morally as she was behind it materially."

Calling on that masterly and level-headed judge of East and West, Dr. Bryan, for more light on the theme so camouflaged by Hearn, we find him less eulogistic. He is unable to forget little historical notes, such as the martyrdom of the 200,000 Christians in 1638, and the contrast of the shogun's hundreds of concubines and thousands of servants with the "poverty, disease, starvation, and the slow rotting of millions." Dr. Bryan speaks by the card, and could no more fall into Hearn's mode of estimating moral well-being than he could obscure a quiet shrine with endless iteration of "grotesque" and "fantastic" and "mysterious" and "weird." His book is not a history but an interpretation of the histories of Murdoch, Brinkley, and others, including the best Japanese authorities. When therefore he states that in Japan seventy years ago "civilization had reached about the same stage of development as in twelfth-century Europe," we must believe (at the same time having no need to throw away our chrysanthemums and netsuke) that he is near the mark. Hearn thought Christianity a curse to Japan; Dr. Bryan sees in its influence the future happiness and power of the country, by means of the development of personality—a factor at present considerably to seek. And this is surely sound; a Japanese Christian, or one moved by Christian forces, is readily distinguished, and commands particular admiration. Dr. Bryan's invaluable view is too far-flung for him to attend to the intellectual nationalism apparently starting up in Japan since 1923 and 1924; one of its circumstances provides matter for thought in reference to his paragraph on the great influence of English on Japanese character and culture, for it is now reported that the number of hours allotted to English in Government schools is cut down to half. And indeed the boldly urged proposal was to drop compulsory English altogether.

EDMUND BLUNDEN.

## THE COUNTRY

**When Squires and Farmers Thrived.** By A. G. BRADLEY. (Methuen. 10s. 6d.)

**A Small Boy in the Sixties.** By GEORGE STURT. With an introductory Memoir by ARNOLD BENNETT. (Cambridge University Press. 10s. 6d.)

**Vignettes of Memory.** By LADY VIOLET GREVILLE. With 18 illustrations. (Hutchinson. 18s.)

THERE is a place which the English call "the country"—a place not wild, magnificent, or beautiful in the grand style, whose rivers, mountains, and plains are no match for those of Italy, France, or Spain, which is, indeed, rather a domestic place, where the timid can walk in safety; frequent roads lead to frequent inns; footpaths cut across fields; manor houses blossom in parks, and church spires prick through the trees. Such as it is, the country is mixed up with English life as it is with no other life; has worked itself into our consciousness as into no other consciousness. It has oddity and simplicity, character and homeliness; now and again it flames into a strange beauty, all the lovelier for being rare. Here are three books which testify in their different ways to the English passion. First there is the wheelwright, George Sturt, who scarcely left the Surrey village where his father and his grandfather made wheels before him until he died there. Next there is Mr. Bradley, farmer, land agent, agriculturist, who has travelled everywhere and learnt much. Finally there is a great lady, Lady Violet Greville, whose castle, or the castle of whose ancestors, has overlooked the waters of Loch Lomond these many centuries. From three different angles the three points of view all converge upon the same object at the same time—that is to say, the 'sixties and 'seventies of the nineteenth century.

George Sturt sees the country much more closely and much more minutely than the other two from the windows of his mother's shop at 18, Borough, Farnham. No little boy could possibly be dull in Farnham in the 'sixties, he assures us. There was such a variety of things to be seen by merely standing at the window and looking out. One



might see a milkman carrying his pail with a hook instead of a hand; or a man with a club foot; or a "menadgery"; or the horrid procession of Guy Fawkes; or a runaway horse. One had only to trot along the street and one saw, but once only, a cock and several hens pass beneath a thick green slab of glass let into the pavement. Once he was asked to go and see a bullock killed. Once his father made a siphon from a gas pipe, and thus drew the beer from the yard into the cellar. Once Mr. Hackman, the fishmonger, gave him a red and yellow tulip. It was a contented, minute, pettifogging life, neither beautiful nor luxurious, but George Sturt loved the country, and never wished to leave it, though his country was only that raked and dug and built over Surrey which Mr. Bradley from his angle will scarcely allow to be country at all.

For it is one of the engaging qualities of English country lovers that they will only give the title to certain angles and sections of the land. The water ousel is Mr. Bradley's guide, and the water ousel, it appears, avoids the Home Counties like poison. But, naturally, Mr. Bradley, with his Cambridge training and his scientific interests, has a far wider range than the wheelwright. It is not only that he sees more—the West, the North, with a view of Canada thrown in; it is that he sees with the self-consciousness of the educated man how the country has carved and shaped the country man. Up in the North the character is cut into sharp and formidable contours. The East Lothian farms breed remarkable characters. There was the great Hugh Bertram, steward to George Hope at Fentonbarns, a farm famous for its produce among English, and even among Continental, farmers. Bad farming, said Bertram, made him "purely seek." His honesty was so fierce that if he caught a hedge clipper loitering he would shout so as to be heard two fields away: "Mon, d'ye no ken yer a thief? Y're takin' yer maister's siller an' stealin' his time." Yet he was a genial man, and sat at the head of his table flourishing his carving knife like a sword and coining wonderful phrases and new words as he carved. Up in the North the head shepherd might well have one brother a Fellow of a Cambridge college and another a master at Cheltenham. Then in the vast solitude of the Lammermuirs dwelt in regal state such potentates as old Mr. Darling, whose farm was of unknown size and had been farmed by him and his forbears for generations. No road came nearer than many miles. But if a horseman or an adventurous gig ventured past, the old man would issue out in his swallow-tail coat and high, white neckcloth and insist that the stranger should come in to dinner. This was an admirable meal, though held at the inconvenient hour of four, and it was followed by an array of urns, sugar, silver ladles, rummers, and such whisky as cannot be drunk nowadays. No "idling" with the glass was allowed. To shirk either dinner or drink was an insult that Mr. Darling never forgave. Then there were the Parsonages, where men of breeding and education became marooned and did nothing but preach an old sermon on Sundays, sucking peppermints, and drift about the house in flowered dressing-gowns on week-days, while the clerical children picked up such language that mealtimes became a torture. One little boy of five could blaspheme in such a way as to drive the guests from the table. But they grew up admirable citizens none the less. On the roads still drove men who had driven when the body-snatchers were abroad, and could tell tales of a third party on the cart in front who sat very still and stiff and was found to be the corpse of an old man just dug from the grave. Obviously, Mr. Bradley loves his country, and finds it not only in the fields, but in the ways and speech of the peasants. But with his love is mixed a great anger. For it is all over; "the pride of great farming, the pride of great landowning, all gone and in the dust."

Now it comes to Lady Violet's turn to be heard; and, oddly enough, her view of the country strangely resembles the wheelwright's, though she looked not through a shop window at Farnham High Street, but through the windows of Buchanan Castle at the waters of Loch Lomond. The great lady and the little shopkeeper both accept the life which their fathers bequeathed to them with something of the same content and simplicity. Lady Violet did her lessons in an apricot house or an arbour, with the bees buzzing and the swallows twittering outside. "The scent of the

geranium still clings to the German grammar," she writes. She was very happy. She fed the deer on dainty bits of bread and buttered toast. Her aunt's footman carried the prayer books to church, and "when we partook of the Sacrament no one dared to approach the altar till we returned to our seats." Nevertheless, "a feeling of general goodwill pervaded the air," she writes, and certainly there is nothing in the memories of George Sturt to contradict her. The Sturts had their social inferiors, too; boys who carried garlands on May Day, boys who played at Auntie and were ragged and dirty. The Sturts had the run of Farnham Park, and were quite ready, presumably, to let the great people take the Sacrament before them.

On each of these three witnesses, then, the country has exercised its extraordinary charm. They owe their best years to the fields and the woods. Their farms and cottages and castles lie jumbled together in the landscape. It is partly that strange medley of grandeur and simplicity, age and incongruity, which charms us when we lie on a hill-top and look down on the country.

## INDIA AND THE COMMISSION

**India To-morrow.** By KHUR DEKHTA AGE. (Oxford University Press. 3s. 6d.)

THE Royal Commission on India has been appointed: some day it will report. Meanwhile, it is imperative that prospective Members of Parliament and others should equip themselves to give an intelligent reception to its findings. A valuable contribution to this end is made by the (regrettably) pseudonymous author of this unpretentious but stimulating little book. Assuming on the part of the reader some elementary knowledge of the basic facts of Indian life and of recent history, he has something of interest to say on almost all the vexed problems which the Commission will have to face. His conception of the Commission itself as not "a Heaven-sent mission of intellectual perfection," but a body of *rapporteurs*, striving to interpret India's own true mind, has already, thanks perhaps partly to the publicity given to the author's own work by the *TIMES*, entered into the public consciousness of this country.

Too wise to attempt to anticipate the Commission's findings, the author does not present us with a cut-and-dried scheme for the future government of India. It would be a mistake, therefore, to try to summarize his work as though it were a complete and systematic thesis. Enough to say that it contains many hints and *obiter dicta* which dogmatists of all races and parties would do well to ponder carefully. Englishmen would be well advised to note his opinion that "whether or not Western democratic institutions are most suited to the Indian environment, India does definitely desire and will be satisfied with nothing less than, or different from, the general Western conception of representative government, accepting that conception in its broader aspects"; and his reminder that, "however logical it may be to build up democratic institutions from the village, the political history of England has told another tale. It was the Barons who wrested the Magna Carta from King John, the new industrial towns that wrested the power from the large landowners, and only by degrees has the spirit of democracy filtered down through the State from the top to the bottom of the social ladder."

Indians, on the other hand, may profitably note the opinions that "the fundamental difficulty of dyarchy has been the lack of corporate responsibility, not only between the members and the Ministers, but between the various Ministers themselves," and that "Ministers will never succeed in commanding public support or in carrying out any practical reforms until they take their courage in both hands and are prepared to tax the people for the people's good."

No less pregnant is the author's reminder that "nepotism, which is regarded as a crime in England, makes a strong appeal to some of the finer attributes of the Hindu family and caste relationships. . . . The only remedy seems to lie in the transfer of all right of appointment to a strong and impartial public services commission."

These quotations must suffice to indicate the quality of this modest and suggestive tract, which deserves to be widely read.

## MR. GUEDALLA'S ADVENTURE

**Conquistador: American Fantasia.** By PHILIP GUEDALLA.  
(Benn. 10s. 6d.)

TRAVELLERS' tales can be of two kinds. There are those told simply to interest the stay-at-home. There are those told a little less ingenuously to interest the inhabitants of the country which they describe. Mr. Philip Guedalla is a good enough journalist to know that nothing interests a man who has been marooned by snow more than news about snow-drifts. Every edition of the newspapers holds some new reflection of his own experience. He buys them readily to read about what he already knows. The skilful journalist, playing into his hands, makes his snowfall worse than it has been for half a century, and tickles his vanity by saying that nothing could have exceeded the good temper and resource of those who were marooned.

When Mr. Guedalla set out to write his book about America (he is perfectly frank that it is intended to be no more than the impressions of a three months' lecturing tour) he could have had small doubt where it would find its most eager readers. "Having crawled, buzzed slightly, across a vast window-pane, I felt that the news of my adventure might interest some of the other flies—and perhaps the pane itself." Thus quite consciously he joins the ranks of the Leacocks and the Maurois, and writes to tickle the friendly susceptibilities of his hosts.

Is this perhaps quite just? Why should not Mr. Guedalla, as much as anyone else, have enjoyed his three months' progress through the United States, en fête, it seems, from beginning to end? Why should he not write pleasantly of the hospitalities extended to him? Why, after his experiences, should he not temper his criticisms with kindness—as any but the surliest of guests would do? Is it that from him we expected something in a more biting tone—though Heaven knows why we should—and feel a little put off with his frank praises? I am afraid that there may be something in this.

"Conquistador" is a scrap-book, and, like all good scrap-books, its charm lies in the uncertainty of what each page may contain. Sometimes the pictures which the designer has chosen to paste in are a little commonplace, more often they are intensely interesting. But if some are commonplace, they are the best commonplace, for Mr. Guedalla, whatever may be said of him, is never dull. If he has a fault as a writer, it is that his prose is sometimes too exuberant, but how well can one bear with an exuberance which sooner or later brings its reward in the shape of some brilliant shaft of wit, of humour, or of observation.

For humour I should take first the story of his visit, with his wife, to an unnamed State Legislature. It is too long to quote in full, but his picture of the "mildly conversational assembly legislating at the rate of about a Bill every sixth minute, for its three million subjects," is inimitable. The author and his wife are called to a seat by the Speaker's chair:—

"Soothed by the incomparable lullaby of Eloquence we suspected nothing. There was a sudden pause provoked by Mr. Speaker's hammer soundly rapped on the stone slab in front of him, as he invited the assembly to 'meet' the young ladies of some inaudible academy, present at their deliberations. A sudden fringe of heads appeared along the rim of a distant gallery; and the assembly rose and 'met' them. We were still unsuspecting when he beat the slab again and asked the House—to our increasing horror—to 'meet' the unworthiest of its spectators. That nervous auditor, having observed the ritual, arose; and a courtly Legislature rose with him. . . . As flight was shameful, he remained and spoke. But the full terrors of a Legislature's hospitality were as yet unsuspected. For the Speaker rose once more and indicating that their guest from England had a wife, invited the assembly to 'meet' her also. Once more the alarming rustle of legislators rising to their feet; once more the spectacle of an embarrassed guest smiling uncertainly from the dais as she 'met' her hosts. Still insatiable, Mr. Speaker demanded one speech more; and since Speakers must be obeyed, even by lady visitors, speech was forthcoming. A member covered the family confusion with a word of charming welcome, introducing, by way of figurative ornament, one of the pigeons which flapped unaccountably about the hall and was momentarily dignified, for symbolic purposes, as the authentic dove of peace."

Scattered through his book are many delightful little sketches such as this—for the author pretends to no profound study of his subject. "Once more," he says, "this is no

treatise. Treatises abound. So why write another? Besides, a wise observer does not reach conclusions after three months of observation. His stay has been too long for that." We get merely the travellers' impressions, and, even when dealing with international questions, little more than the record of a conversation or the views gathered in an hotel lobby.

His chapter on War Debt he calls a "Social Note." The Prince of Wales and War Debt he found the predominating topics of his hosts' conversation. "British guests are everywhere expected to unmask whole batteries of views . . ." on these two subjects. As for the Debt, he has "no deep resentments to reveal, no readjustments to suggest." He is almost grateful for the settlement. "For it evokes a shy affection for his own country in the most unexpected quarters. Yet even that may not be altogether good for us: for is not the most exasperating quality of Englishmen their perpetual certainty of having done the right thing?"

Some of the chapters purely concerned with travel are the most delightful in the book. There is one, "A Peak in Darien," which describes his first view of the Pacific, which is written in the gayest of good spirits and would deserve a place in any anthology of modern essays. There are others of which the same might be said. Mr. Guedalla's fancy is so vivid and his powers as a writer are so considerable that he can enliven the simple incidents of travel, the railway journey, the arrival at the hotel, in any way he pleases. In this book he has pleased to tell his scrap-book story gently and humorously. That he enjoyed his journey across the States there can be no doubt—and little doubt, either, that his hosts will enjoy his book. The "other flies" will do so, too, and even those who have not yet been privileged to crawl across that particular window-pane

J. B. S. B.

## THE WORKING CLASSES

**A Short History of the British Working-Class Movement.** Vol. III.—1900-1927. By G. D. H. COLE. (Labour Publishing Co. 6s.)

MR. COLE's modesty disarms criticism. In the Preface to this third and final volume of his miniature trilogy he confesses that it was harder to write than the second, "and I am even less satisfied with it now that it is done." Unfortunately it is impossible not to agree with him. The first volume was distinguished by brilliant flights of historical interpretation. The second contained the results of research among sources not easily accessible to the student, which threw light on a confused period of Trade Union history. It was not exciting, but it fulfilled the function of a second act, which is usually the least able of the three to stand alone. But Act III. has failed to grip, and the epic of the Working Class has degenerated into the recitation of a Minute Book.

Undoubtedly the task was difficult; certainly Mr. Cole has produced a brief, clear, and, on the whole, trustworthy account of the Trade-Union movement of the twentieth century. It is not ungenerous to ask why he has failed to do more.

There are several reasons. The most obvious is the impossibility of telling us anything that we did not already know. Trade Unionism has been too prominent in the twentieth century for the main facts of its history to escape notice, and beyond the main facts there was no room, in so short a work, to venture. The larger study that he promises us in the future will give Mr. Cole more scope to use his unrivalled knowledge of the subject, and it should be important. Secondly, he has misused his personal bias. He has suppressed it too severely. Had he told his story in a spirit of generous enthusiasm, at least for his subject, if not for his hero, we should have felt the dramatic force that is in it and the pulse of human life. But his story is dead, and its death brings us no nearer to the truth. When, in his final chapters, personal feeling breaks loose in an undercurrent of venom, it seems merely irrelevant.

But most important is his unwillingness to attempt an interpretation of events so recent. It is true that time is the historian's ally and passes judgments on events, and it is usually rash to go to press without its contribution. But in this particular case, time's contribution has just come in.



Mr. Cole obviously does not agree with those foolish people who saw in the General Strike the victory of a new and revolutionary spirit. On the contrary, it was the tragic climax of the long story he has been telling, and by its light the past is brilliantly illumined. Undoubtedly the next generation will see even more clearly than we can, but the light is good enough to attempt a sketch, and we have advantages that the next generation will lack. We owe it to them to speak now.

### THE POPULARIZATION OF SCIENCE

**Possible Worlds, and Other Essays.** By J. B. S. HALDANE. (Chatto & Windus. 7s. 6d.)

THIS book represents popular scientific journalism at its best. The subjects are of general interest; most of the information comes straight from the stable (for Mr. Haldane is one of the most distinguished of our research workers); and the whole is presented in a simple, agreeable and appropriate style.

The table of contents itself provokes curiosity. "On Being the Right Size," "Enzymes," "Man as a Sea Beast," "The Time Factor in Medicine," "Possible Worlds"; these are but a few headings out of some three dozen. In the journal in which it appeared, each article must have seemed to many readers "the best thing in the paper." But circumstances alter impressions as well as cases; and the effect of these thirty-five unrelated, or but distantly related, chats on modern science, philosophic speculations, and expressions of the unscientific prejudices of a scientist in mufti, bound together and printed in the verisimilitude of sequent chapters of a continuous story, has something in common with that produced by other many-coursed heterogeneities. Lay sermons evidently do not differ from others in making but poor book-fellows. However, if read, as they ought to be read—one at a time, with decent intervals between—these essays will provide almost any intelligent reader with effective mental stimuli such as few books afford. But he must read them all, if Mr. Haldane is not to be balked of the aim he has set before himself—to help the average man to realize what is being thought and "what is going on inside the laboratories"; otherwise he is likely to be deceived by apparent divergencies suggested by expressions in different parts of the book. Regarded separately, some of the articles would seem to indicate a complacent attitude to life and to philosophic problems which, other pages clearly tell us, is not truly that of the author. For, in spite of what seems a somewhat over-enthusiastic confidence in the possibilities of science, Mr. Haldane does not hide from us his private suspicion that things, in human significance, may not be at all what they seem—even to the scientist; and he thinks in the bottom of his heart that "the universe is not only queerer than we suppose, but queerer than we *can* suppose. . . . There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of or can be dreamed of in any philosophy." "That is the reason why I have no philosophy myself," is his rather boyish and naive addition.

Whether or not he has philosophy, there can be no question that Mr. Haldane has prejudices. These in no way detract from the readableness of the book; but, when prejudices come in at the door, science and many other incompatible things notoriously fly out of the window. This entertaining phenomenon may be observed on those pages where parsons, anti-vivisectionists, or the doctrines of the New Health Society are mentioned. The "most important motive" which activates those who feel unhappy about vivisection is "a hatred of science"; and "anti-vivisectionists are responsible for far more deaths per year in England than motor vehicles, small-pox, or typhoid fever." The most foolish and unfounded statements of the Anti-Vivisection Society could hardly beat this in fanatical exaggeration. I doubt if this chapter will add many names to the list of subscribers to the Research Defence Society, in spite of Mr. Haldane's statement that he had never seen an animal undergoing pain which he himself "would not have been willing to undergo for the same object." To those sceptics who sarcastically comment: "It's very easy to talk," I would advise the careful reading of another essay in this volume, entitled: "On Being One's Own Rabbit." Thenafter, they

may doubt the author's mental latitude but they cannot possibly doubt his courage or good faith.

Mr. Haldane is far more reliable when he is telling the layman "what is going on inside the laboratories" than when he is presumably trying to make the flesh of his colleagues creep by lurid stories of the world outside. For instance, it is difficult to believe that many of the curates one has met "have always used their power to evade the moral obligations of the ordinary man; and threatened him with fire here or hereafter, or with social or economic penalties, if he referred to the fact." Again, the suggestion that biological laws apply equally to the economic organization of States is a little crudely argued.

Still, we should all feel too small and humiliated if Mr. Haldane confined his talk entirely (as he does mostly) to those things he knows all about and we know practically nothing about. A touch of fallible humanity makes the book more enjoyable.

HARRY ROBERTS.

### ECONOMIC HISTORY

**Studies in Economic History.** By GEORGE UNWIN. With an Introductory Memoir by R. H. TAWNEY. (Macmillan. 15s.)

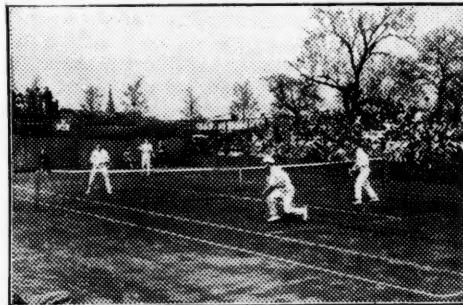
**General Economic History.** By MAX WEBER. (Allen & Unwin. 12s.)

**Economic History of Europe.** By MELVIN M. KNIGHT. (Allen & Unwin. 12s.)

HISTORIANS are turning into serious people. They are no longer primarily concerned with the youthful task of telling a story, and they are no longer satisfied with the effort to establish a number of facts with as much accuracy as possible. Such is the humble folly of men that, in the name of science, they have often refused the work of interpretation and attempted to deliver themselves of a mental product devoid of all thought and significance. In reaction, one school uses historical material to convey the drama, the pattern, and rhythm which the artist may discover in every record of human lives. Another reaction is equally distinctive of the present era. Every year now sees the increase of



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sociological history, which aims at solving or illustrating some problem of social organization. Professor Allyn Young, in his editorial introduction to a sketch of European economic history up to the end of the Middle Ages, points out that Professor Knight's intention has been to help students of economics "who find that their most important problems have to do with the structure and the operations of the mechanism of modern business." Professor Knight, that is, has written a sketch of the growth of business institutions. He has traced in outline the development of capitalistic methods of commerce and their effect upon agriculture, industry, and social organization.

Max Weber and Professor Unwin were also interested in the development of capitalism from a point of view even more definitely sociological. Max Weber was first a sociologist, who found material in every record of human behaviour. In this posthumous book, composed mainly from the lecture notes of students, the most interesting chapter is perhaps the last, where he arrives at the significant conclusion that modern industrial capitalism was for the first time made possible by the formation of a rational ethic in the Renaissance and Reformation. Professor Unwin's opinions on this subject—the relationship between economic and psychological factors in history—were equally definite though perhaps less objective. In an introductory memoir to him, Mr. Tawney succeeds, in a manner which is beyond all conventional praise, in conveying both a vivid picture of an astonishing man and at least a key to his historical and philosophic ideas. After reading this memoir and the papers on economic history and historical interpretation which follow it, one can almost hear George Unwin arguing about history and lecturing with a learned vivacity and stimulating incoherence; one can pick up the threads and join in the argument with a confidence that the central problems of history are being really discussed, not evaded in a mist of words.

Believing that the creative development of the individual was alone of value and that external organization could do little to aid it and much to hinder it, Professor Unwin found every voluntary association hopeful and creative and every compulsory act of authority deplorable. The State was to him the devil, and its most devilish activity was war. History was a long struggle between the peaceful creation of voluntary groups and the militaristic destruction of coercive Governments. Nor is his thesis the crude individualism of early industrialism; it is based on a considered philosophy and elaborated by scholarship. Such a discussion is inseparable from the central historical problem, the relationship between economic and psychological factors in history. The greatest of delusions in Unwin's view is to imagine that political institutions have ever been of considerable service to men. It is not in their political activities that they have proved the power of the human will, but in their social development. He is not a believer in the "economic interpretation of history" in the sense that purely economic facts have dictated human development, although they have furnished "the environment, the conditions," in which "the inward possessions and experiences of mankind are realized." The same philosophy runs through all these papers, whether they are essays on historical teaching or more technical studies of the economic functions of individuals, guilds and states in the Middle Ages, or philosophical papers upon historical interpretation. One of the most interesting of all these papers is an essay, published during the war, called the "God of History." Here Unwin discusses the effects of wars, and finds them wholly vile; war, historically considered, is the great destroyer, in spite of which man's creative work continues, producing not, as Seeley and the historians of political nationalism would have us believe, the British Empire as its climax, but the whole social achievement of man, the "religion, art, literature, science, music, philosophy, and, above all, the ever-widening and deepening communion of human minds and souls with each other." Professor Unwin was one of the few historians who did not shirk the discovery and statement of his own assumptions. He knew what he believed valuable and for what he was searching, and his work is therefore itself a permanent and living contribution to that social achievement which alone makes history worth recording.

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## BOOKS IN BRIEF

**History of the Great War. Vol. III.—Military Operations, France and Belgium, 1915.** By BRIGADIER-GENERAL J. E. EDMONDS and CAPTAIN G. C. WYNNE. (Macmillan. 12s. 6d.)

If all the military operations referred to had been as brilliantly conducted as they are now described, life would have been different. "The year 1915," says General Edmonds, "is not one on which the Nation or the Army can look back with satisfaction." At least we do not need any finer official historian of Neuve Chapelle and such affairs than himself and his assistant. The masterly control of many sources of information and the far-sighted criticism of generalship are accompanied by a side-play of local details, enlightening and human. Incidentally the notices of the early use of gas are of great interest. The French Tenth Army reported, on March 30th, 1915, and on the statements of prisoners, that the Germans had installed gas cylinders at Zillebeke. On April 15th our Second Army gave G.H.Q. a similar warning. It was talked about at a Vth Corps conference that night. A week later the first gas attack was let loose with melancholy effect, no protective action having been taken; and indeed it is difficult to see what measure could have been applied in the time. But what is more curious is that the Germans made a trial of gas shells at Neuve Chapelle on March 10th, but in the confused atmosphere of explosives and corruption no one on our side realized it. There is another footnote to the matter: the Germans for a time in the early part of the war mistook the fumes of picric acid in British shells for gas. And after all it is a lugubrious choice between these two types of punishment.

**Endymion and Falconet.** By BENJAMIN DISRAELI. (Peter Davies. 10s. 6d.)

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## INSURANCE NOTES.

## WHY NOT ANNUAL BONUSES?

**T**HE end of a year has always had a special interest for life policy-holders because it is the date upon which the valuations are usually made in order to determine the bonuses to be distributed.

Apart from the slowly increasing number of life offices which make their valuations yearly, there are some half-dozen whose quinquennial valuations were due to be made as at the end of the year which has just closed.

Including the Industrial-Ordinary Companies there are now eighteen which distribute bonuses annually. There are thus about twenty-five of the sixty-five or so life offices operating in the British Isles which will shortly declare their bonus results. But why should not all the offices be making similar declarations?

Has not the time come when this question of annual valuations and bonuses might be tackled seriously by those Companies—nearly fifty in number—which still follow a practice dating well back into the last century?

Is there any really adequate reason why annual bonuses should not be adopted universally? They have so many advantages that it is hard to resist the feeling that it is worth a big effort by the offices to bring about this change in their practice. A general move in this direction would be another, and a very important, step towards making life assurance more popular with the British public.

## "INDEPENDENCE"

This is the title of a pamphlet which we have received from the Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Society, Ltd. It is dedicated to "workers who in the anticipation of leisured ease in their later years must seek the solace for their present labours." The pamphlet deals very fully with the "C.M.L." Endowment Assurance policy which shows some striking results when compared with an ordinary investment at 5 per cent. compound interest, but makes only a passing reference to the provision for dependents in the event of death. The need for increased life assurance is so great that we should like to see the offices devoting more of their new business propaganda to the Whole-Life Assurance policy, rather than to the purely investment aspect of life assurance.

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3. The profit or loss on the Non-Participating and Annuity business of the Metropolitan will not be pooled, as in the arrangement between the London Life and Clergy Mutual, but will be credited or debited to the Metropolitan.
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## FINANCIAL SECTION

## THE WEEK IN THE CITY

## CONVERSIONS—HOME RAIL OUTLOOK—RUBBER AND TIN.

THE gilt-edged market finished the year in a blaze of glory. This is not surprising in view of the Christmas treat which the Treasury provided. The issue of a short-dated security (5 per cent. Treasury Bonds, 1933-35) carrying conversion rights into a long-dated security (4 per cent. Consols at £86 6s. 6d. six months hence and at £88 4s. 2d. twelve months hence) was a novelty which could not fail to delight the market on the eve of the Christmas holiday. The list for cash applications for the new Treasury 5 per cent., 1933-35, has been closed earlier than was expected. This means that the Treasury has obtained sufficient response to meet the balance left of 3½ per cent. War Loan (£42,000,000) maturing in March and the 5 per cent. and 4 per cent. National War Bonds due in April (£87,000,000, less what is converted into 5 per cent. Loan). Next month we shall know the amount of conversion applications from holders of the 5 per cent. and 4 per cent. National War Bonds maturing next September.

In the midst of this cheerfulness it is as well to remember that the Treasury has a year of debt conversion ahead even more depressing than 1927-28. These are the maturities in 1928-29 :—

5% National War Bonds, September, 1928	£178,000,000
4% do do. do. do.	20,000,000
5% do do. February, 1929	94,000,000
4% do do. do. do.	5,000,000
	£297,000,000

The taxpayer must regretfully reflect that the Treasury is making no real effort to reduce the dead weight of the National Debt. Maturities have been so fast and furious in recent years that it can do little more than deal with each as it arises by attaching some bait to attract the market. The various offers of 3½ per cent. Conversion Loan in 1925, for example, were each more attractive than the one before, and the fourth offer of that loan, made in September, 1927, even beat the last in 1925. The dead weight of the debt increases rather than diminishes with each conversion. The offer of 4 per cent. Consols at £86 6s. 6d. and £88 4s. 2d. is less objectionable than the offer of 3½ per cent. Conversion at 75, but the Colwyn Committee on National Debt emphasized strongly the undesirability of issuing stocks at heavy discounts. When the time comes to deal with the enormous block of 5 per cent. War Loan, 1929-47—£2,000 millions—the Government must go out to help the taxpayer and not the market. An issue of something like 4½ per cent. stock at par would be the ideal. The City will undoubtedly reply that to achieve this ideal the Government must first reduce the burden of taxation.

The coming session in Parliament will see the railway companies' fight for road-running powers. The Stock Exchange, unaccustomed to the niceties of Parliamentary obstruction, will probably take the common-sense view that the railways must be given powers to run on roads as well as rails if they are to offer the public an up-to-date and efficient transport service. That is one cause for public interest in the home rail market. Another is the feeling that the iron and steel industry may possibly recover some lost ground in 1928. There will be no strong feeling on that point until the fittest of the iron and steel companies amalgamate and reduce their working costs, but a purchase of the particular home rails depending upon heavy traffics affords a comparatively harmless way of participating in an iron and steel gamble. Finally, there is the dividend outlook which will keep the home rail market alive at any rate for a month. The traffics of the four groups in 1927 showed in some cases a fair improvement :—

		In thousands of £.		
		Gross Traffics.	Compared with	
		51 weeks, 1927.	1926.	1925.
G.W.R.	...	£30,659	+4,916	+558
L.M.S.	...	74,974	+11,096	-194
L. & N.E.	...	57,643	+11,110	+1,294
Southern	...	22,765	+1,276	-394

These traffics have been earned on rather less than the "standard" charges, which apply as from January 1st—the "appointed day." The new goods rates were put into effect in February, 1927, and minor changes (upward) in passenger rates followed on January 1st this year.

The general reserves of the four railway groups have been so depleted by the appropriations in supplement of dividends in recent years that there is no hope of the companies reverting to the 1925 dividends. In the 1926 accounts the general reserve had fallen in the case of the L.M. & S. from £10,288,000 to £2,850,000, L. & N.E. from £2,042,000 to £591,000, G.W. from £8,270,000 to £2,040,000, and Southern from £704,000 to nil. The 1925 and 1926 dividends, and the market expectations (for what they are worth) of 1927 dividends, are shown in the next table :—

Dividends %.	G.W.R.	L.M.S.	L. & N.E.	S.
			Pref. Ord.	Def.
1925 interim	2½	2½	5	3½
1925 final	4½	3½		
1926 interim	1½	1½	1½	1½
1926 final	1½	1½		
1927 interim	2½	2	1½	2
1927 final (est.)	3½	3		
Current Price of				
Stock	97½	76½	44	37½

\* These estimates of final dividends assume that economies in working costs have been effected sufficient to offset the decline in interest income following upon the depletion of reserve funds. It is difficult to see how the L. & N.E. will be able to pay its second preference dividend, much less the 1½ on the preferred, without drawing on depreciation funds, which are not strictly to be used for dividend equalization.

Two speculative markets have a fair chance of seeing higher prices in 1928—rubber and tin. In the case of rubber, the amalgamation of the United Serdang and Amalgamated Rubber Estates was an example of economic right-thinking which should be commended largely to the rubber industry. In Mr. Eric Miller's words : "The welding of rubber-growing interests into more powerful units was not only a wise step but was almost a necessity." The "bullish" view of the rubber share market rests, however, upon an anticipated decline in rubber stocks this year. Since October 17th London stocks have fallen by 7,709 tons to 63,207 tons, which compares with 48,382 tons a year ago. The recent decline in stocks has followed upon increased consumption, and this fact, in conjunction with the tightening-up of the restriction scheme, is responsible for the feeling of qualified optimism. If the American motor industry recovers its 1926 prosperity the optimism will be justified. Only the price will tell. At the moment of writing, spot rubber is at 1s. 8d. per lb., which compares with a "low" of 1s. 3½d. last year.

Like rubber, the prospects of the tin share market also depend to a large extent upon the American motor industry. It is not generally realized that the output of new motor vehicles in the United States last year was about 1,000,000 below that of 1926. The suspension at the Ford works was largely to blame. Since every automobile consumes approximately 6 lbs. of tin, it is not remarkable that the American imports of tin in 1927 should have fallen below those of 1926. The statistical position of tin at the close of the year was, however, extremely healthy. If America consumed less, other countries consumed more, and world production and consumption were not far out of balance. At £262 per ton tin-producing companies can make excellent profits.



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